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CONFIDENTIAL

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CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

THE LEBANON

PART 1

January to December 1947

(Continued from

"Further Correspondence respecting Eastern Affairs," Part 67)

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CONFIDENTIAL

CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING THE LEBANON

PART 1.—JANUARY TO DECEMBER 1947

(Continued from "Further Correspondence respecting Eastern Affairs," Part 67)

CHAPTER I.—MISCELLANEOUS

E 1150/272/88

No. 1

LEBANESE COURTS

Mr. Talbot to Mr. Bevin. (Received 6th February)

(No. 11) Beirut, 22nd January, 1947

Sir, I have the honour to inform you that, as instructed in your telegram No. 25 of 18th January, I duly exchanged with the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning notes on the subject of the Mixed Courts. I enclose M. Pharaon's note to me in original, together with three certified copies, and three certified copies of my note to him.

2. You will observe that the formal amendments referred to in your despatch No. 448 of 21st December last have been incorporated, and that, also in accordance with your instructions, the notes are in the first person.

3. I am sending a copy of this despatch with enclosures to the chargé d'affaires at Damascus.

I have, &c. M. J. R. TALBOT.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1

Mr. Talbot to M. Henri Bey Pharon

(No. 10) Beirut, 22nd January, 1947

Your Excellency, I have the honour to make, on instructions from His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, the following proposal on the subject of the Lebanese courts.

of the difficulty, and will allow the cases to be settled with the minimum of delay and in the general interest.

4. As regards the juridical position of British subjects in the Lebanon in the future, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom recognise that they will naturally come within the full jurisdiction of the National Courts. At the same time His Majesty's Government are confident that the Lebanese Government will be prepared to adopt, with regard to their personal status, the rule which is adopted in the majority of countries, namely, that their national law should be applied to them. It is true that in the United Kingdom, and nearly all other British territories for which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are responsible, it is the law of the domicile rather than the law of the nationality which is applied for personal status cases. But the expression "domicile" in English law has a very special meaning and is quite distinct from the conception of residence. "Domicile" refers to the place which is deemed to be a man's permanent home as opposed to the residence which he may establish for even quite a long period elsewhere. Further, every person acquires at his birth as his domicile of origin the domicile of his parents, and the English courts require such strict proof that the domicile of origin has been replaced by a new domicile of choice that it is comparatively rarely that they find that the domicile of origin has been so displaced. Consequently, in fact, the result is that, in the vast majority of cases, a Lebanese national in the United Kingdom and the British territories referred to above will, in fact, be held to be domiciled in Lebanon and therefore in matters of personal status Lebanese law would be applied to him by the courts. Acceptance of this principle would mean that with regard to all questions concerning marriage and conjugal rights, divorce, judicial separation, dowry, paternity, affiliation, legitimation, adoption, capacity of persons, majority, guardianship, trusteeship and interdiction, succession by will or on intestacy, distribution of estates and settlements, and, in general, family law, British subjects in the Lebanon would be subject to their national laws, and if with respect to any of the said questions one of the parties should bring a matter before the Lebanese courts, the said courts would have to apply the appropriate British laws. The competent

British authorities will, of course, furnish to the Lebanese Government, in case of need, the necessary information relative to such British laws.

5. I hope that your Excellency will be able to communicate to me at an early date the consent of the Lebanese Government to a practical solution of these outstanding juridical problems on the above lines.

I avail, &c.

M. J. R. TALBOT.

Enclosure 2 in No. 1

M. Henri Bey Pharaon to Mr. Talbot

(Translation)

Sir, *Beirut, 22nd January, 1947*

I have the honour to reply to the note No. 10 on the subject of the Lebanese Courts, which you were so good as to address to me on 22nd January.

2. The Lebanese Government has the honour to take note of the consent of His Majesty's Government to the abolition of the Mixed Courts as from the end of the year 1946.

3. The Lebanese Government, in the general interest and in order to avoid all unnecessary delay and expense in reaching a final decision of the cases pending before the Mixed Courts, are prepared, as an exceptional and temporary measure, to accept the suggestion contained in your note for their prompt disposal before Lebanese magistrates with experience in the Mixed Courts.

4. As regards the personal status of British subjects in the Lebanon, the Lebanese Government are prepared to adopt the principle, which is already admitted by the Lebanese courts and which is considered as a principle of private international law recognised by the courts of the majority of countries, of the application in such matters of the national law of the person concerned. The Lebanese Government have taken note of the statement of the position in England under English law as set out in your note, according to which, in fact in the majority of cases in England, the national Lebanese law will be applied to determine questions of personal status concerning Lebanese nationals owing to the special nature of the conception of the domicile as developed in the jurisprudence of the English courts.

I avail, &c.

HENRI PHARAON.

E 2346/2346/88

No. 2

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE LEBANON FOR 1946

Mr. Houstoun-Boswall to Mr. Bevin. (Received 18th March)

(No. 45)

Beirut,

Sir,

5th March, 1947

In accordance with the instructions embodied in your circular despatch No. 012 of 4th February, 1946, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith an annual review of the Lebanon for 1946, for which I am indebted to Mr. T. E. Evans, first secretary at His Majesty's Legation. I have found this report both interesting and instructive and I submit that Mr. Evans deserves much credit for having compiled this illuminating document more or less punctually at a time when he has been fully occupied with urgent and important current work.

I have, &c.

W. E. HOUSTOUN-BOSWALL.

Enclosure in No. 2

Annual Report on the Lebanon 1946

The year under review, which ended with the full realisation of the Lebanon's national aspirations and the complete evacuation of all foreign forces, began badly with strikes and demonstrations on 2nd January, the suspension of the meetings of the Anglo-French Military Commissions working out the details of evacuation, and strong official protests from the Governments of both Syria and the Lebanon against the Anglo-French Agreement of 13th December, 1945. The situation developed rapidly, however, when the question of the evacuation of foreign forces was referred to the Security Council of the United Nations Organisation, and when, following the adherence of His Majesty's Government and the French Government to the Council's resolution of 16th February, further negotiations took place in Paris. On 14th March the Lebanese Government were informed that agreement had been reached by the French and British representatives in Paris and shortly afterwards the Lebanese delegation was authorised by its Government to accept the arrangements proposed by the French. The evacuation plans were strictly adhered to by all concerned. British forces were withdrawn by 30th June (with the excep-

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tion of a small liquidation staff, which stayed on until 31st August). French combatant troops were evacuated by 31st August, a liquidation staff of 30 officers and 300 men only remaining until the end of the year. At a meeting of the Lebanese Chamber on 30th December, which was attended by the President of the republic, the Government announced that the evacuation of all foreign forces had been completed.

2. During the first part of the year Anglo-Lebanese and Franco-Lebanese relations were inextricably bound together. Nevertheless, the cordiality of Anglo-Lebanese relations and the confidence placed by the Lebanese Government in His Majesty's Government were in marked contrast to the suspicion which the Lebanese Government and the majority of the Lebanese people entertained towards France almost until the last French soldier had left the country. Following the disappearance, with the departure of the British forces, of visible evidence of British strength, it might have been supposed that British influence would greatly decline. In a large measure this has not been the case, and it is remarkable how widespread is the belief that the country is in reality ruled by His Majesty's Legation, which has merely replaced the French Délégation Générale. Even the Lebanese Government have tended to look to His Majesty's Legation for advice and support, a habit which they evidently find it difficult to drop. There have been several occasions on which the goodwill felt by the Lebanese Government and people towards Great Britain has been clearly shown—the visit in the spring of the Goodwill Trade Mission under the chairmanship of Lord Davidson, the visit in the autumn of Major-General Spears, and, not least, the departure on transfer of His Majesty's Minister. In December the Lebanese Government entered into a contract with Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners for a survey of the economic resources of the country. The announcement that, with the appointment of Mr. Houstoun-Boswall as His Majesty's Minister, His Majesty's Government had decided to establish a

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separate mission in the Lebanon was particularly well received.

3. There were indications that the appointment of Comte du Chayla, the first French Minister, heralded a new era in Franco-Lebanese relations, and it was believed during the first months of his mission that, thanks to his punctilious observation of protocol and lavish entertainment, he was succeeding in his task. Attempts to liquidate a number of outstanding questions, however, soon revealed that a considerable amount of suspicion remained to be overcome. Negotiations for the transfer of the Custodianship of Enemy Property virtually broke down. As a result the Lebanese Government decided to take unilateral action. And on 31st October the Lebanese Chamber approved legislation for the immediate assumption by the Lebanese Government of French responsibilities in this connexion. The abolition of the Mixed Courts also caused considerable difficulty, but by the end of the year the French and United States Governments and also His Majesty's Government had agreed in principle to their abolition, subject to safeguards regarding outstanding cases and on the question of personal status. The liquidation of French properties in the Lebanon was even more involved and little or no progress had been made by the end of the year. Finally, financial questions involving the French guarantee to maintain the counter-value in terms of sterling of the States' franc holdings (and thereby the exchange rate between sterling and Syrian-Lebanese pounds) and also the provision of hard currencies required by Syria and the Lebanon following the withdrawal in March of free convertibility of local currency into sterling, have proved to be an almost insurmountable obstacle. There has also been suspicion of French policy in the economic and religious fields. The Lebanese Government have so far declined to authorise the operation of a French Government-sponsored organisation called "Seriatic," the object of which is to co-ordinate and expand French economic activities in the Levant and in the Middle East generally. They have also resisted attempts by the French to secure the appointment of a Frenchman as Papal Nuncio.

4. Relations between the Lebanon and Syria which, during the summer months were subjected to some strain both for political and economic reasons, improved towards the end of the year, particularly

after the change of government in both capitals. In May the Syrian and Lebanese Governments reached agreement for the establishment of wheat-collecting organisations to take over from the British military-run M.I.R.A., and, as a result, fears of a wheat shortage in the Lebanon were eliminated. The high prices, however, on which the Syrian Government insisted, caused great dissatisfaction in the Lebanon, particularly when it became apparent that the 1946 harvest was an exceptionally good one; and there was repeated agitation, both in Government circles and the press, for a modification of the M.I.R.A. Agreement. Opposition circles went so far as to demand the dissolution of the Lebanese-Syrian Customs Union, and the establishment of the Lebanon as a free commercial zone. The period of misunderstanding with Syria coincided with a rapprochement between the Lebanon, Turkey and Transjordan. Following an agreement earlier in the year to establish diplomatic relations, the first Turkish Minister presented his credentials to the Lebanese President in May, and in September the diplomatic relations between Transjordan and the Lebanon were established. In June the Lebanese President visited Turkey. These developments gave rise to considerable speculation regarding the Lebanon's rôle in a possible policy of encirclement of Syria engineered by Turkey and the Hashemite Powers, and in an effort to dispel Syrian misapprehension, the Lebanese President paid an official visit to Damascus before his departure for Angora. Relations with Syria, however, improved towards the end of the year, when the disadvantages of a Greater Syria appear to have impressed the Lebanese—the Minister for Foreign Affairs stated in the Chamber that the Lebanon was opposed to the scheme—and a corresponding coolness between Beirut and Amman became discernible. As a result of press reports to the effect that British diplomatic circles were in favour of the scheme, a communiqué was issued by His Majesty's Legation in December to the effect that these reports were unfounded, and that His Majesty's Government considered that the question was one that exclusively concerned the Arab countries.

5. Relations with the Arab League and with other Arab countries have, during the year, largely been dominated by the Palestine problem. The Lebanon, as an immediate neighbour of Palestine, has

made no secret of its uneasiness in face of Zionist plans, nor has it lagged behind the other Arab States in affirmation of solidarity with the Palestine Arabs. Early in January decrees were issued to implement the Arab League decision regarding the boycotting of Zionist goods. In response to the insistent request of the Lebanese Government three members of the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry on Palestine visited Beirut in March. Publication of the committee's report led to the usual strikes, and bombs exploded in two Beirut commercial establishments wrongly believed to be Jewish. The invitation to the Lebanese and other Governments to furnish their comments on the committee's recommendations was followed in quick succession by the meeting of Arab rulers at Inchass, the Bludan Conference of the Arab League (which was much enlivened by the reported presence of the ex-Mufti) and a request from the Lebanese and other Arab Governments to His Majesty's Government to open negotiations on the Palestine question. Further outrages occurred when the recommendations of the Anglo-American experts became known and bombs exploded at His Majesty's Consulate-General and the United States' Legation. The invitation to attend the London Conference was well received by the Lebanese Government and accepted in accordance with the decision of the Alexandria Conference of Arab Foreign Ministers. In general leading Lebanese politicians, while publicly proclaiming full support for the Arab cause, are known to favour moderate counsels.

6. As regards the Arab League, the decision of His Majesty's Government to enter into official correspondence with the Secretary-General gave rise to considerable uneasiness in certain circles in the Lebanon. It was construed as a first step towards the creation of an Arab super-State, which would result in the loss of Lebanese independence, and Christian elements emphasised that they were not prepared to accept commitments *vis-à-vis* the League transcending the provisions of the Charter.

7. In the course of the year diplomatic relations were established with no less than thirteen countries. Reference has already been made to the establishment in Beirut of Turkish and Transjordan Legations. On his return from Paris, Hamid Frangieh, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited Rome, and as a result the independence of the Lebanon was recognised by the Vatican. Agreement was later reached

for the exchange of diplomatic missions. It was also decided to open a legation in Moscow, and Khalil Takiuddin was appointed as the first Lebanese Minister.

8. Russian influence in the Lebanon which increased appreciably during the early part of the year as a result of the support given by the Soviet Government to the States at the Security Council, Soviet action in the encouragement of Armenians to return to Soviet Armenia (approximately 20,000 left Syria and the Lebanon before the end of the year), and the open encouragement of local Communists and trade unions by the Soviet Legation, suffered a set-back in the late summer and autumn. This was due partly to the failure of Russian policy in Persian Azerbaijan, and partly to the energetic measures taken by the Lebanese Government to deal with labour problems and their encouragement of anti-Communist trade union movements.

9. Relations between the Lebanese Government and the United States have been cordial, though a large measure of public indignation over developments in Palestine fell on the Americans. An aviation agreement provided for limited fifth freedom, and negotiations continued during the year for the conclusion of a treaty of friendship, navigation and commerce. Difficulties in connexion with the latter were, however, encountered owing to the insistence on the part of the United States Government on non-discrimination and the wish of the Lebanese to provide for preference arrangements for member States of the Arab League. Units of the United States Fleet visited Beirut on two occasions.

10. During the President's visit to Turkey agreement in principle was reached for the settlement of problems outstanding between the Lebanon and Turkey, in particular the question of Lebanese properties in Turkey and Turkish properties in the Lebanon, and the question of an extension of the option period for Lebanese abroad who had failed to opt for Lebanese nationality under the Treaty of Lausanne. These arrangements were confirmed when the Secretary-General of the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs visited Beirut in December.

11. Internal politics have claimed their share of attention. Two changes of Government occurred during the year. Neither the Sami Solh nor the Saadi Munla Administrations were conspicuous for their strength or their competence. When on

their return from Paris in March the Minister of the Interior tendered his resignation and the Minister for Foreign Affairs threatened to do likewise, it was apparent that the position of the Government was unstable. Criticisms were levelled at it from all sides and a petition was addressed by leading personalities to the President demanding administrative and constitutional reforms. A reshuffle pleased no one, and on 22nd May Sami Solh tendered his resignation. Considerable difficulty was experienced in the formation of a new Administration, and attempts by Abdul Hamid Karameh and Riad Solh in turn to form a Government failed, largely owing to the rivalry of Riad Solh and Henri Pharaon. Finally, a transition Government was formed by an outsider, Saadi Munla. It was clear that the Government was weak and could only survive as long as Henri Pharaon and Riad Solh failed to compose their differences. In addition, the Government was faced by serious labour and economic troubles. Strikes occurred in the port administration, railways, tramways, electricity companies, and the tobacco monopoly. Considerable firmness was shown by the Minister of the Interior, Saib Salaam, and Henri Pharaon exerted his influence against the Communist trade unions through the more moderate Labour Front sponsored by him. Nevertheless, in spite of these successes, economic difficulties proved too much for the Government and Saadi Munla resigned in December. There had already been indications of a rapprochement between Riad Solh and Henri Pharaon, and the election of Habib Abi Chahla to the presidency of the Chamber in October was due to the sup-

port of Riad Solh and the neutrality of Henri Pharaon. On 14th December Riad Solh formed a Government with Henri Pharaon as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and thus achieved the nearest possible approach to a national Government. This achievement was the result of far-reaching concessions by both Henri Pharaon and Riad Solh. Provided these two men continue to co-operate, the Government is generally considered to be the strongest since the régime was established in November 1943. In view of the impending elections, great efforts were made to achieve this result.

12. After the agreement had been reached for the evacuation of foreign forces the President's main pre-occupation has been the activities of his personal rival, former President Emil Eddé. The latter's visit to Paris in the summer, and reports that he had been in touch with British personalities, caused him great uneasiness. This was further increased by the decision of Eddé's party to modify their previous attitude of hostility to the Arab League in the hope of gaining the support of the Christian Nationalists. The President realised that as a result of this development the gulf between Eddé's Christian supporters, and the Christians who followed his own lead was, in theory, considerably narrowed, and he probably also suspected that Eddé had made approaches to His Majesty's Legation offering full co-operation with the British authorities. The President's fears were, however, considerably allayed following the formation of the strong Riad Solh Government, and at the end of the year he appears to be facing the future and the coming elections with more equanimity.

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No. 3

PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS TO THE LEBANESE PRESIDENT

Mr. Houstoun-Boswall to Mr. Bevin. (Received 7th March)

(No. 34) *Beirut,*
Sir, *25th February, 1947*

As I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 117, I presented to the President of the Lebanese Republic the letters announcing the recall of my predecessor, Mr. T. A. Shone, and accrediting me to be His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Beirut, which

accompanied your despatch (unnumbered) of 9th December, 1946.

2. As I was obliged to travel by air I was unfortunately not able to wear uniform on this occasion; and that was a source of some disappointment to the Lebanese Government. However, when I had explained my embarrassment, arrangements were most courteously and speedily

made for me to appear before the President in a lounge suit, and all the other formalities exacted by the protocol department were complied with. Accompanied by twelve members of my staff, I was conveyed to and from the residence in five presidential motor cars. Outside the residence a guard of honour was drawn up and a band played "God Save The King." Having inspected the guard, I was presented to the President and handed to his Excellency the letter recalling my predecessor, after which I read my speech, of which I enclose a copy, and passed to the President my own credentials. The President, having replied in cordial terms, as will be observed from the accompanying text of his speech, the official ceremony concluded and we enjoyed a glass of champagne with his Excellency before withdrawing. We left the residence to the strains of the Lebanese National Anthem.

3. An hour later I returned to the residence accompanied by my staff and had the honour of taking luncheon with the President, the president of the Chamber, the president of the Council of Ministers, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and one or two other Lebanese notables. I was impressed by the evidently sincere cordiality of those present, none of whom failed to express their admiration for the British people and their appreciation of the policy of His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

W. E. HOUSTOUN-BOSWALL.

Enclosure 1 in No. 3

Speech by His Britannic Majesty's Minister to his Excellency the President of the Lebanese Republic

I am profoundly conscious of the honour done me by The King, my august sovereign, in accrediting me to be His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Lebanese Republic.

It is my good fortune to have passed through this country before, when I was serving in a neighbouring capital, and I vividly recall the beauty of its countryside and the desire I then felt to study more closely the history of this ancient land; my pleasure at finding myself again in your midst, this time in an official capacity, is correspondingly greater, especially as now I shall have the advantage not only of improving my knowledge of the past but also of observing current events in the sincere hope that they will lead to that

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happy future which it is the object of your Excellency's Government to bring about.

As the first of His Majesty's Ministers to be accredited exclusively to the Lebanese Republic, I will use my best endeavour to acquaint myself with the country's individual character and special needs which are the result of its unique history and geographical position. Evidence of the concern of his Majesty's Government for the independence and sovereignty of this country has not been lacking, and I am glad of this opportunity of assuring your Excellency that His Majesty's Government will continue to watch the development of the Lebanon with the most friendly and real interest. I look forward with pleasure to strengthening still further the cordial relations of confidence and friendship which so happily exist between our two countries and to the establishment of which my predecessors, with your Excellency's co-operation, were able to contribute.

In this period of reconstruction, when the ravages of terrible war are being repaired, it is, as is well known, the earnest desire of His Majesty's Government to collaborate closely with all countries in the proper estimation of those spiritual values without which economic prosperity and social stability would be devoid of meaning. I am sure that your Excellency will find yourself in agreement with this sentiment.

Finally, I have much pleasure in conveying to your Excellency the sincere good wishes of His Majesty's Government for the prosperity of the Lebanese Republic and for your Excellency's good health and personal happiness.

Enclosure 2 in No. 3

Copy of Speech made by the President of the Lebanese Republic following the Presentation of Credentials by His Majesty's Minister on 20th February, 1947

M. le Ministre,

Il m'est très agréable de recevoir, aujourd'hui, en votre personne, l'Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plénipotentiaire de Sa Majesté le Roi de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, Empereur des Indes.

J'ai été très sensible au geste du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique, créant une représentation propre au Liban, qui témoigne de l'intérêt qu'il porte aux rapports existant entre nos deux pays et

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du désir qui l'anime de les renforcer encore davantage.

Ces rapports remontent à une époque reculée, et le temps n'a fait qu'étendre et consolider le patrimoine commun à nos deux pays.

Le Liban ne saurait oublier, en particulier, les précieuses marques d'amitié que ne cesse de lui témoigner la Grande-Bretagne depuis son accession à l'indépendance souveraine et son entrée dans le concert des Nations Unies.

Et ce n'est pas sans une vive satisfaction que je relève l'affirmation nouvelle que vous avez bien voulu faire: à savoir, que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique, qui n'a pas omis de marquer le souci qu'il porte à notre indépendance et à notre souveraineté, continuera de suivre le

développement du Liban avec le plus réel et le plus amical intérêt.

La mission qui est ainsi dévolue au Représentant de la Grande-Bretagne de resserrer les relations fondées sur l'amitié et la confiance existant entre nos deux pays, nul ne pouvait mieux la remplir que vous qui avez déjà donné, dans un autre pays arabe, la preuve de votre compétence et de vos hautes qualités.

Vous pouvez être assuré, M. le Ministre, de trouver auprès de moi et du Gouvernement libanais un large appui et un entier concours pour le succès de votre mission, et je suis heureux, à cette occasion, de vous exprimer les vœux les plus sincères pour le bonheur personnel de Sa Majesté le Roi Georges VI et pour la prospérité de la Grande-Bretagne.

E 3802/251/88

No. 4

MEMORANDUM REGARDING FUTURE BRITISH ECONOMIC POLICY IN THE LEBANON

(Communicated in Beirut Despatch No. 70 of 18th April; Received 8th May)

British trade with the Lebanon is relatively unimportant for the following reasons. The country is small; it produces no large quantities of the essential goods we need in exchange for our exports and its prices are in any case too high; it is a soft currency area; and finally the United Kingdom appears to be unable at the present time to supply many of the goods which the Lebanon needs, such as agricultural tractors, cotton piece-goods, wool yarn and so on.

2. On the other hand, Beirut merchants are among the shrewdest in the world, and they have widespread trading connexions outside the Lebanon. They conduct trade on behalf of other Middle East countries and engage in the most varied transactions all over the world. Moreover, there would appear to be scope for the development of the country's internal resources, for example, through hydro-electric schemes, the improvement of facilities for tourist traffic and so on. Furthermore, the Lebanon is politically and strategically important, and its importance may be enhanced if difficulties persist in Egypt and Palestine and if British oil interests should decide to construct further pipe-lines to terminals on the Lebanese coast.

3. In view of the geographical position of the Lebanon, there is an intense struggle for influence between the British, the French, the Americans and the Russians. The British are economically weak and suffer from the disability that it is desired to refrain from encroaching upon French preserves. On the other hand our interests in the Middle East as a whole make it impossible for us to ignore events in the Lebanon; and our prestige, which we wish to maintain, leads the Lebanese to look to us for help and support. France is supported by a strong pro-French element and there are signs that the French intend to stage a come-back in the economic field, using their currency stranglehold as a lever. The third contending party, the Americans, are powerful, with cultural, oil and aviation interests; while the fourth, the Russians, are reported to be very active now and there have been recent indications that they, or countries under their control, may enter the Lebanese market in the near future.

4. In deciding what our policy should be in such circumstances, we have to bear in mind that the Lebanese tend to try to please everybody in an effort to get all they can out of everyone, to keep all the Great

Powers on their side and to involve them in commitments which ensure their continued interest in the country's future prosperity. A typical example of this tendency has been the effort in certain Lebanese circles to counterbalance the agreement between the Lebanese Government and Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners by a similar agreement with the French company, Seriac.

5. Broadly speaking, therefore, the position appears to be that, while we are bound to be concerned in the prosperity of the Lebanon, we are economically too weak to do very much ourselves and in particular we cannot afford open competition with the other Great Powers. It would accordingly seem that we should—

- (a) Aim at maintaining our prestige and spreading our influence in the cheapest ways open to us in terms of money and man-power.
- (b) Consider co-operation in the economic sphere with one or more of the other Great Powers.

6. As regards (a) we should obviously do our best to give the Lebanese sound and impartial advice. There are several ways of doing this. In so far as the Commercial Secretariat has a reasonably large staff, the head of the office can devote part of his time to mixing freely with Lebanese Ministers, officials and private individuals concerned with economic and financial problems, public works, development schemes and so on. The advice and views of a British official are always taken seriously into account, once he has succeeded in gaining the confidence of the Lebanese. Similar advice in specialised fields can be given by the experts attached to the British Middle East Office. For example, Mr. Audsley, the Labour Adviser, has in the past given useful advice on labour legislation and has helped to secure modifications in such measures as the Lebanese Labour Code. Again, it is to be hoped that in the course of his impending visit, Dr. Murray, the statistical expert from the Middle East Office, will be able to give the Lebanese much-needed assistance in devising methods of compiling statistics.

7. An outstanding example of the way in which the United Kingdom can help the Lebanon and at the same time assist in maintaining and spreading British influence without incurring heavy expenditure is the Lebanese Government's contract

with Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners under which this firm has begun an economic and technical survey with the object of determining the best methods by which the country's resources can be developed. Another example is the association between British Overseas Airways Corporation and Middle East Air Lines, which it is felt might be maintained and even extended to cover the whole of the local company's activities. We might also be able to secure the appointment of more British advisers in the local Ministries. There is only one such British adviser at present (Colonel Jones, attached to the Lebanese grain-collecting organisation, Mira). Apart from giving the Lebanese help, we should endeavour to give them as much *support* as we can, without, however, involving ourselves in financial commitments (*e.g.*, over their currency problem). We might also consider the possibility of increasing British imports from the Lebanon, such as olive oil and citrus fruits. (Paragraph 3 (b), (c) of Foreign Office circular despatch No. 028 of 12th February refers.)

8. As regards (b) above—the possibility of co-operation with one of the other Great Powers—it was argued in Mr. Young's despatch to the Foreign Office No. 139 of 10th August, 1946, that joint enterprises with the French might be undesirable. Co-operation with the Russians is out of the question. There remain the Americans. In the light of Foreign Office circular despatch No. 028 of 12th February, and in view of the projected reductions in the legation staff, should we not now consider closer co-operation with the Americans in the Lebanon? If we gave them the lead, they would probably follow. In the past, co-operation in the economic field has been difficult because we have been in competition with them on certain matters; our policy has not always been in line with theirs; and we have been engaged in trying to get a footing on our own, which tended to preclude too close an association between the two legations. However, it should be possible to co-operate with them, especially now that Mr. Pinkerton has succeeded Mr. Wadsworth as United States Minister. Many of our interests are parallel and it would seem, for example, that our objectives in regard to oil policy are practically identical. The Iraq Petroleum Company and its Lebanese subsidiary contain American as well as British interests; the main oil-distributing companies are the

American Socony and the British Shell; the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company are linked with an American group and their interests in regard to possible pipe-line construction appear to be similar to those of the Trans-Arabian Oil Company.

9. By collaboration with the Americans in this connexion is meant frequent frank exchanges of views on what both sides are doing. One might envisage, for example, a periodical meeting between the American Commercial Attaché and the British Commercial Secretary. Information regarding the status of local firms, market conditions, Russian activities, and so on, might be exchanged. We could each tell the other frankly our respective positions in regard to, for example, the local currency question. We could even take joint action on some matters, such as projected local legislation. We might try to reach an agreed line of policy in regard to the contract for the construction of the proposed new aerodrome at Khalde. In some cases, one side might put in a word of support for the other with the Lebanese authorities. It is conceivable that, if the Americans were assured of our general support as regards their interests, they might be satisfied with underwriting our position in the Middle East and not be tempted to build up their

own influence to a point of overshadowing our own or resulting in a dual policy in the Middle East. It is not difficult to devise methods of closer collaboration with the Americans.

10. If such a policy were pursued and we and the Americans collaborated here together, it would—

- (a) Enable us to force the French to be reasonable in their demands on the local Government.
- (b) Help to keep the Russians in their place.
- (c) Assist us in gaining a measure of American support for our policy here and also perhaps in other Middle Eastern countries.
- (d) Possibly tend to lighten the economic pressure from the Americans in other Middle Eastern countries where we have predominating economic interests, such as Egypt and Iraq.
- (e) Go some way towards training the Americans, who are apt to be impetuous and tactless in their dealings with Arabs.
- (f) Be in line with the policy outlined in Foreign Office circular despatch No. 028 of 12th February.

E 5334/951/31

No. 5

LEBANESE POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINE

Mr. Houstoun-Boswall to Mr. Bevin. (Received 19th June)

(No. 455)
(Telegraphic)

Beirut,
18th June, 1947.

Palestine.
Following is extract from statement of Government's policy read by Prime Minister to the Lebanese Chamber on 17th June:—

"Our Government will continue its efforts in support of Palestine for the preservation of its Arabism and the attainment of its right to sovereignty and independence. We, in spite of the well-known delicate circumstances which have of late surrounded the case of this

unhappy Arab country, remain convinced that right will ultimately prevail. Announced both at United Nations and in Cairo our attitude towards the International Committee of Enquiry which has been set up and hold in full agreement with our sister States that genuine effort, organised action and sincere collaboration are necessary for saving Palestine and will guarantee the repelling of aggression regardless of how great and varied are the methods and elements of such aggression."

E 5349/754/65

No. 6

LEBANESE SUPPORT FOR EGYPT

Mr. Houstoun-Boswall to Mr. Bevin. (Received 18th June)

(No. 456)
(Telegraphic)

Beirut,
18th June, 1947.

Following is extract from statement of Government's policy read by Prime Minister to Lebanese Chamber on 17th June:—

"I am anxious to announce that it is our Government's policy to continue our support of Egypt in her struggle for the attainment of her national aspirations. We hope that the great sister State will be able shortly to realise her aims."

E 6430/4814/88

No. 7

HEADS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS IN THE LEBANON, 1947

Mr. Houstoun-Boswall to Mr. Bevin. (Received 19th July)

(No. 107. Confidential)

Beirut, 14th July, 1947

Sir,
I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a report on the heads of foreign missions in Beirut.

I am sending copies of this despatch and enclosure to His Majesty's Ambassador at Cairo and to His Majesty's Minister at Damascus.

I have, &c.

W. E. HOUSTOUN-BOSWALL.

Enclosure in No. 7

Heads of Missions in the Lebanon, 1947

Argentina

Dr. Albert Vinas, minister (7th May, 1947).

A bachelor, at present searching for a legation, has not yet found his feet, and so is naturally not very happy. He seems quite pleasant and says that he is very anxious to co-operate when he gets the two secretaries whom he expects. He is unlikely to have much to do here. He started life as a surgeon and has served in Panamá and Costa Rica. Speaks indifferent French, no English.

Belgium

Count Geoffrey d'Aspremont-Lynden, minister (22nd December, 1946).

Quite a nice man with a vague and pleasant wife. He has a certain amount to do here as his country has several big commercial interests. I like what I have seen of him, but have not seen much.

Brazil

M. Luiz Fernandes Pinheiro, minister (January 1946).

Also accredited to Syria. Having been a naval officer and later a surgeon, he was formerly consul here, being promoted when his Government recognised the Lebanon. He is a friendly and hospitable man who has nothing much to do here except bathe. He is very social and has such a well-developed party spirit that he rarely misses even a charity performance.

He is married and his wife only recently returned from a protracted visit to Brazil. She seems affable. He speaks fluent French and Spanish but little English.

Czechoslovakia

M. Frantisek Bachtik, minister (16th February, 1947).

Formerly consul here since 1943. A mouse-like and rather earnest little man with a nondescript, fair wife. I should call him a typical Czech colleague, very dull but well-disposed and earnest. I have not seen much of them but have met them occasionally at the races.

The real power in the legation is his secretary, Stanek, who maintains very close liaison with the Russians.

Egypt

Abdul Rahman Hakki Bey, minister (12th January, 1945).

Also accredited to Syria. Formerly chargé d'affaires in London for some time; later minister at Angola.

A charming, distinguished and intelligent colleague. Speaks excellent English. I knew him in Bagdad when he was chargé d'affaires and find him no less helpful and friendly now than he was then. I agree with my predecessor in saying that, of all the representatives of the Arab League States, he is most inclined to take a reasonable and dispassionate view; he can even discuss the Anglo-Egyptian dispute quite objectively, but he feels strongly on the subject of Palestine.

His wife, who is now in Egypt to supervise the education of their children, is a charming lady.

He expects to be ambassador at Rome when the Peace Treaty has been signed. I shall be sorry to lose such a good colleague.

France

Count Armand de Chayla, minister (7th July, 1946).

A bachelor who does things very well and entertains on a lavish scale; evidently has money of his own. Pleasant looking and well turned out. Very much the "sportsman." He is superficially an agreeable but not particularly co-operative colleague. Unfortunately from our point of view in the Lebanon, he is, politically, fanatically on the side of the Christian element, and does not conceal his contempt for the Moslems. He appears to have established for himself quite a reasonably good position in rich Lebanese society.

Holy See

Mgr. Alcide Marina, Nuncio (24th June, 1947).
An experienced Vatican diplomat. He has been Papal Representative at Tehran and Angora, whence he came here direct. He is, I believe, about 64 years of age and well preserved. He makes an excellent impression and, judging by what he said when we met for the first time, I should imagine that he will exert a very wholesome influence among the Christians here, some of whom are inclined to look back with longing to the days when they enjoyed foreign protection.

Iraq

M. Abdel-Jalil el-Raoui, chargé d'affaires.
Has been in the Lebanon for about seven years as secretary and assumed charge some months ago pending the arrival of the new minister, who has, I see, now been appointed. I knew him when he was in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at Bagdad. He is very well informed and a thoroughly friendly and co-operative colleague. He knows this country well and, in spite of his long residence, is able to take a detached view still, though I suspect he is not above doing a bit of intriguing locally. He is most reasonable and capable of discussing all Arab problems dispassionately.
Speaks good English.

Italy

Dr. Adolfo Alessandrini, chargé d'affaires (14th March, 1947).
Has the personal rank of minister, but his position has not yet been regularised. Like so many Italians, he declares that he definitely disapproved of the war and so got posted to Switzerland, where he married the daughter of the Spanish Minister, whose wife was, I understand, English. They are a very friendly couple and he is pathetically anxious to make himself agreeable to and to co-operate with the British.
Both speak fluent English.

Persia

M. Zainal Abedine Rahnema, minister (25th October, 1946).
Also accredited to Syria.
A nice little, earnest man who, I believe, owns a newspaper in Tehran which is now edited by his son. Has some reputation locally as a man of letters. He is a well-informed colleague and very co-operative. He has a probably nice wife, who is unfortunately a very indifferent linguist.

Poland ("London Government")

M. Zigmunt Zawadowski, minister (17th August, 1944).
*Until the enforced dissolution in July 1945 of the Government which he claims to represent, M. Zawadowski enjoyed a good position here, partly because the Lebanese were grateful to Poland for being the first country, after Great Britain and France, to recognise their independence. Since then his position has become increasingly equivocal, for, although he is still recognised by the Lebanese Government and continues to enjoy full diplomatic privileges, he is like a general without an army, as the whole of his staff have been absorbed into the Polish Welfare Organisation, which is run under my auspices on behalf of the Treasury Polish Committee. M. Zawadowski (who is, technically speaking, the doyen of the Diplomatic Corps in the Lebanon) has expressed his intention to fly his flag till the last, and has declined to be absorbed into the welfare organisation and receives no funds from us. The policy of the Lebanese Government is explained by their desire to avoid trouble among the large Polish colony which, at our behest, they have received here

from Persia, and whose allegiance is still overwhelmingly pro-London. (Written in 1946.)
I seldom see him, as, not unnaturally, he does not circulate much nowadays. He seems very grateful for what is being done for the Polish refugees in the Lebanon by His Majesty's Government, and is therefore quite friendly. I have not met his wife, who is French.

Saudi Arabia

Sheikh Sayed el Rashash, chargé d'affaires (11th December, 1946).
A clever and intelligent Damascene whom I knew at Bagdad, where, as here, he proved a good and co-operative colleague.
His wife is Turkish and does not usually meet men. However, I was flattered recently by being invited, with my wife, to an "intimate" luncheon of seven courses as evidence of his friendship for me. It was a most wearisome experience, as Mme. Rashash speaks only Turkish and Arabic, of which my wife and I are ignorant.

Soviet Union

M. Daniel Solod, minister (1st October, 1944).
Very civilised and superficially frank and friendly. Until the arrival of the Nuncio he performed the functions of doyen of the Diplomatic Corps with amiable dignity. He is about 40 and a Ukrainian.
He has a nice wife and two children. Mme. Solod rarely accompanies her husband to social functions and has told my wife how much she resents being treated as something quite unusual just because she is a Russian. Both speak French.

Switzerland

M. Henri Blanchard, chargé d'affaires (2nd July, 1942).
A very pleasant young man whose duties are, I should imagine, chiefly of a consular and commercial nature. He has an agreeable and decorative wife (Lebanese).

Transjordan

Mohamed Ali Ajlouni, minister (1st October, 1946).
Quite a nice, friendly, but awfully boring, man who was, I believe, sent here because of his opposition value at Amman. He is, I understand, an exponent of the slogan "Transjordan for the Transjordanians." His position *vis-à-vis* the Lebanese Government is difficult owing to Greater Syria propaganda, but he holds his own quite well and is, I think, on the whole fairly discreet in his activities.
He is married, but his wife does not appear in society, which he loves to frequent. Has been taken up by the local aristocracy, which is at present opposition-minded.
He speaks only Arabic.

Turkey

M. Celal Osman Abacioglu, minister (3rd May, 1945).
A hypochondriacal Turk of the old school. He is rarely seen without a greatcoat even on a hot day and is pompously formal. Is given somewhat to speechifying in the course of private conversation. He and his rather dim wife are most friendly.

United States

Mr. Lowell Pinkerton, minister (26th February, 1947).
Having served in London, Australia, New Zealand, &c., this is his first post outside the British Empire. He was, I believe, eight years consul-general at Jerusalem before coming here. He is very friendly and co-operative, and, I think, utterly reliable. He has a nice wife.

Yugoslavia

M. Dusan Curcija, chargé d'affaires *ad interim*, (6th June, 1947).
Has been holding the fort since M. Branislav Grujic, the previous chargé d'affaires, departed in order, it is understood, to be corrected in Belgrade for loose living. I have never met him, he has never called.

Ministers Accredited to the Lebanon but Resident Elsewhere

Greece

M. Georges Triantaphyllidis (17th June, 1947).
Cairo.

Saudi Arabia

Sheikh Abdul Aziz el Zeid (16th February, 1945).
Damascus.

Sweden

M. Widar Bagge (17th June, 1947).
Cairo.

Switzerland

M. Alfred Brumer (4th September, 1946).
Cairo.

Yugoslavia

M. Esref Bednjedic (18th May, 1946).
Cairo.

E 7953/2686/88

No. 8

ANGLO-UNITED STATES RELATIONS IN THE LEBANON

Need for Agreement on Middle East Policy

Mr. Houstoun-Boswall to Mr. Bevin. (Received 29th August)

(No. 128)
Sir,

Beirut,

21st August, 1947

The decision of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company to establish its terminal in the Lebanon has naturally led to a considerable increase in American influence in the country. Recruitment of local labour has begun. The prospect of large-scale American expenditure and the employment by the company of large numbers of Lebanese, very many of whom have been without work since the departure of the British and French military authorities, not only on construction but also in the refinery, when it is built, has focused the attention of the public on the American enterprise. Nor is this increase in American influence confined to the economic field. Politically, too, the Americans are taking a more prominent part as a corollary of their bigger economic stake. As already reported in my telegrams Nos. 494 and 495 of 4th and 5th July, the American Legation here has taken a close interest in Druze affairs, and there is no doubt that advice given by my American colleague largely influenced the Druze decision to attempt to reach an amicable solution of their differences with the Syrian Government. It is also probable that the recommendation by the Americans in Damascus that military equipment should be supplied to the Syrian Government was made not only on long-term strategic grounds but also in the interests of increased internal security which the passage of the American pipeline would make an important American requirement. And in this connexion one recalls Mr. Scrivener's telegram

No. 282 of 5th July, which also foreshadowed the despatch of an American Military Mission to Syria.

2. The Lebanese have been quick to see in this enhanced American influence in the political field the germs of an Anglo-American rivalry which they, of course, would be only too ready to exploit. With the military evacuation of the French, His Majesty's Legation has been in a virtually predominant position: not only is it regarded by the general public as in some way being the successor to the French Délégation Générale but the Government look to us for guidance in important and even relatively trivial matters. It is now being asked whether the Americans, almost overnight, are taking over this position, which, it is imagined, we attained with so much effort and difficulty. Well-disposed elements have expressed the hope that the large-scale American enterprise which the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company represents will be counterbalanced by a similar British undertaking, arguing that whereas in patriarchal Saudi Arabia economic factors do not necessarily involve political influence, the same does not apply in the case of the commercially minded Lebanese.

3. The difficulties which the American company are experiencing in reaching agreement with the Syrian Government, have increased the prospects of Anglo-American rivalry in the eyes of the public. Press reports to the effect that British intrigues are responsible for the intransigence of the Syrian authorities *vis-à-vis*

the American company give colour to this belief, and the united efforts of my staff and myself have so far not been successful in dissipating it. Indeed, I have noted with surprise, and not a little disappointment, a tendency among certain responsible Americans, who ought to know better, to entertain such suspicions. I am happy to record, however, that the United States Minister, to whose notice I brought this unfortunate atmosphere, is working loyally to induce the naturally irritated oil men to preserve a sense of dignity and proportion. There is also a widespread conviction that even on questions of more general policy we and the Americans do not see eye to eye, *e.g.*, that His Majesty's Government are secretly in favour of the Greater Syria project and Hachemite aggrandisement, while the State Department, in deference to the wishes of King Ibn Saud, is opposed to it. My American colleague and I are both well aware of the dangers of this sort of rumour and are sparing no pains to demonstrate in what close and intimate relations our respective Governments are.

4. In his despatch No. 559 of 25th June Sir Ronald Campbell demonstrated, to my mind, conclusively, the imperative need for Anglo-American agreement on Middle East policy. The ideal arrangement would, I believe, be for the Americans generally to underwrite our policy in the Middle East rather than for them to assume specific responsibilities in any particular part of the Arab world. Any suggestion of a partnership involving zones of influence would be resented by the Arabs, and there would be grave danger of a "dual policy." With the institution and development of the Arab League the Middle East, including Egypt, has more than ever become one unit calling for a single and undivided policy. Such a general American endorsement of British policy—which is what I mean by underwriting—might conceivably have the desired effect on the Egyptians and I believe that it would effectively prevent the spread of the rot to other Arab countries, where British prestige and influence are still high. In the Lebanon, at least, I am convinced, our political position cannot at present successfully be challenged and is proof even against American economic infiltration on a considerable scale. Such general and necessarily rather vague conversations as I have had on this subject with my American colleague, who has spent a number of years in the Middle East and

whose views are believed to carry some weight in the State Department, lead me to hope that the United States Government might well be disposed to consider favourably some such arrangement. They do not appear to have any desire to undertake military commitments in this part of the world; they probably fear that any move in this direction might well end in their assuming responsibilities involving the presence of American forces in Palestine. It would thus seem to be an American interest that the British military position in the Middle East should not be weakened. If this is so, the case for Americans assuming political responsibilities in any particular Middle East country (as opposed to general support for British policy) is less strong. In general, as was apparent when American aid to Greece and Turkey was announced, the Arabs are in a vague way suspicious of American policy, not only because of its pro-Zionist tendencies, but also because it smacks of "dollar imperialism." And in spite of difficulties in Palestine and Egypt there is a widespread feeling that the Arabs cannot do better than continue their association with His Majesty's Government, whose policy is well tried and who have shown understanding and sympathy for Arab aspirations. The Americans are also aware that our long experience of Arabs and aptitude for Arab affairs are a valuable asset which they do not at present possess nor—here, at any rate—show much sign of acquiring. Likewise, the danger of the Arab Governments playing them off against us (a game at which they are past-masters) cannot have escaped them.

5. In Egypt, particularly at the present time, it is probable that the Americans are exposed to considerable temptation (which promises a cheap advantage over us), in the form of requests for the supply of military equipment, military missions and various loans which would render the Egyptians independent of us financially. As I see it, there are only two considerations, apart from general American endorsement and support of our policy, which are likely to bring the Egyptians to their senses:—

- (1) Fear of Russia. Unfortunately this motive does not appear to be so powerful in Cairo as it is in Bagdad and Beirut and, incidentally, is likely to weaken in proportion to any increase in American commitments (particularly military) in the Middle East.

- (2) Egypt's financial, economic and commercial dependence on the United Kingdom. Thus American aid to Egypt in any form might increase our difficulties not only in Egypt itself but also in the other Arab countries over which Egypt has virtually gained ascendancy (and that is my excuse for this incursion into the sphere of His Majesty's Ambassador at Cairo). Moreover, the constitution of a joint defence board as contemplated in article 3 of the Bevin-Sidky draft treaty would seem to exclude an American Military Mission. (Nevertheless, if that ideal should prove unattainable it can be argued that an American Military Mission would be the next best thing in view of the considerable commitment undertaken by the United States in Greece and Turkey.) Therefore, if the temptation to supplant us in Egypt is firmly resisted by the Americans, it would, I submit, be worth while to make some effort to persuade the United States to support generally British policy in the Middle East instead of competing with us politically.

6. At this stage our moral prestige which, as Sir R. Campbell points out in his despatch referred to above, exists in a high degree in Arab countries, could be made to count. To deal effectively with Orientals experience shows that two qualities are essential, strength and justice; the former, even in its potential form, is usually sufficient and does not necessarily involve the presence of large military forces provided their availability in time of need is beyond question; the latter must be ever present and is expected of His Majesty's Government by Arabs in the proportion that it is absent in their fellow-countrymen. I have yet to be convinced that Arabs are prepared to expect justice or impartial advice from Americans, whom they have not learned to respect so far and whom they are apt to regard merely as a rather tiresome and effervescent, but otherwise welcome, source of money and material benefits.

7. To achieve this end of Anglo-American co-operation in the Middle East I believe that, though much can be done by His Majesty's representatives and their American colleagues in the various Arab countries, the matter is one which must be

discussed on the highest level in London and Washington. It is also an essential corollary to any American underwriting of our Middle East policy that in the economic and cultural fields the Americans should be assured of our support as regards their essential interests. Ordinary commercial competition (as opposed to serious differences over, for example, oil policy) is probably of little importance and is no doubt a healthy state of affairs; but as regards their vital requirements, oil, they should be able to count on our backing, provided it is not to our own detriment. Otherwise it is inevitable that they should seek to build up their own position politically to safeguard their interests—please compare paragraph 9 of the memorandum forming the enclosure to my despatch No. 7 of 18th April. It is noteworthy that, in connexion with their present difficulties with the Syrian Government over the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company, the Americans have, so far as I am aware, refrained from asking for assistance in the form of British good offices in Damascus, presumably because of the suspicion entertained by some of them, particularly the representatives of the company, that the British authorities were secretly working against them.

8. In conclusion, I would revert briefly, and I fear belatedly, to one of the problems of more immediate concern to the Lebanon and in which Anglo-American co-operation would be useful. The question of Greater Syria, *i.e.*, the unification of Syria and the Transjordan under King Abdullah, continues to exercise both the Government and the general public and I submit that it is of considerable importance that the British and American Governments should jointly consider the problem and, if possible, adopt a common policy. My American colleague informs me that he has no knowledge of the attitude of the State Department, adding that any advice he had given the Druzes in connexion with the present dispute with the Syrian Government had been prompted by a desire to avoid serious trouble in an area through which the American pipeline would pass and not by any dislike of the Greater Syria project as such. He assumes that if the Arabs themselves were in favour of the project the United States Government would raise no objection, *i.e.*, the American attitude is not fundamentally dissimilar to our own. It is a fact, however, that it is widely believed

that the American Government are opposed to the project and that His Majesty's Government, in spite of official statements, are in favour of it. I am aware, however, that the general problem of Greater Syria and policy in regard to the project is now increasingly engaging the attention of His Majesty's Government, and I venture to submit that in these deliberations the

Anglo-American aspect should be borne in mind.

I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's representatives at Cairo, Washington, Bagdad, Damascus, Amman, Jedda and to the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.
W. HOUSTOUN-BOSWALL.

E. 8485/3080/88

No. 9

LEADING PERSONALITIES IN THE LEBANON, 1947

Mr. Houstoun-Boswall to Mr. Bevin. (Received 15th September)

(No. 130)
Sir,

Beirut, 22nd August, 1947

With reference to Sir Terence Shone's despatch No. 35 of 3rd March, 1945, I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on leading personalities in the Lebanon.

2. It is regretted that owing to pressure of work and shortage of staff during the past year, preparation of the report has been long delayed.

3. Notes on the principal personalities have been partly rewritten and in many cases amplified to include more detailed references to their political ideological tendencies. It is hoped that thereby an understanding of political events in a country where organised parties hardly exist and politics are largely personal, will be facilitated. In preparing the report, account has been taken of the results of the elections of May 1947 and of the subsequent reshuffle of the Government.

I have, &c.

W. E. HOUSTOUN-BOSWALL.

Enclosure in No. 9

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3. Mohammed Aboud Abdel Rezzek.
4. Me. Habib Abi Chahla.
5. Abdulla Abou-Khater.
6. Me. Joseph Abou-Khater.
7. Me. Roukos Abou-Nader.
8. Ashraf Ahdab.
9. Ibrahim Ahdab.
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11. Hussein Aoucini.
12. Emir Majid Arslan.
13. Emir Nuhad Arslan.
14. Shebli Aryan.
15. Ahmed el Assad.
16. Me. Taufiq (Toto) Awad.
17. Me. Ibrahim Azar.
18. Dr. Raif Bellama.
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25. Me. Jawad Boulos.
26. Me. Philippe Negib Boulos.
27. Me. Camille Chamoun.

28. Camille Youssef Chamoun.
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65. Sheikh Béchara el Khoury.
66. Dr. Elias Khoury.
67. Kabalan Issa Khoury.
68. Pierre Khoury.
69. Sami el Khoury.
70. Selim el Khoury.
71. Victor Khoury.
72. Emile Lahoud.
73. Dr. Charles Malik.
74. Jamil Mikkawi.
75. Mukhtar Mokayish.
76. Moussa Moubarek.
77. Michel Moufarrej.
78. Saadi Munla.
79. Gabriel Murr.
80. Alfred Naccache.
81. Adib Nahas.
82. Gibran Nahas.

83. Wadih Naim.
84. Alfred Nasr.
85. Sulaiman Naufal, General.
86. Muhieddin Nsouli.
87. Izzedin Omari.
88. Henri Pharaon.
89. Nasser Raad.
90. Dr. Moustafa Rifai.
91. Amin Saad.
92. Ali Salam.
93. Saib Salam.
94. Anis Saleh.
95. Joseph Salem.
96. Joseph Saouda.
97. Ramez Sarkis.
98. Alfred Skaf.
99. Joseph Skaf.
100. Riad es Solh.

101. Kazem Solh.
102. Sami es Solh.
103. Ibrahim Sursock.
104. Emile Tabet.
105. Georges Tabet.
106. Jacques Tabet.
107. Khalil Takieddin.
108. Philippe Tacla.
109. Dr. Jamil Talhouk.
110. Salim Tayara.
111. Fozil Trabulsi, Colonel.
112. Habib Trad.
113. Me. Pierre (Petro) Trad.
114. Gibran Tuéni.
115. Me. Adel Usseyran.
116. Me. Abdullah Yafi.
117. Yusuf ez-Zain.

1. Khaled Abdel Khader

A Sunni Moslem landowner and one of the leading Beys of the Akkar (North Lebanon) born 1896; is actively engaged in smuggling. Unsuccessfully contested the 1943 and 1947 elections. Formerly a supporter of Emile Eddé and an opponent of Abdel Hamid Kerami, has recently joined forces with the latter in his campaign against President Khouri.

2. Aboud Bey Abdel Rezzek.

A Sunni Moslem, born 1891. The principal Bey of the Akkar (North Lebanon) and the largest landowner in the Lebanon. A former Deputy Nationalist since 1943; now an opponent of Abdel Hamid Kerami. A sly and crafty individual, whose sole interest is personal gain. Notorious for indulgence in unnatural vices.

3. Mohammed Aboud Abdel Rezzek.

Son of No. 2. A Sunni Moslem, born 1904. Elected a Deputy for the second time in 1943 on Abdel Hamid Kerami's list, but has since turned against him. Secondary education and mediocre intelligence; would do anything to become Premier. Re-elected Deputy in May 1947. Minister of Finance, June 1947.

4. Me. Habib Abi Chahla

A Greek Orthodox lawyer of Beirut, born 1903. Holds the Paris degree of Doctor of Law. Several times a Minister. Was formerly a supporter of Emile Eddé but broke with him after the 1943 election, in which he was successful. Vice-President and Minister of Justice and Education from 1943 to January 1945. Remained staunch to the Government in the crisis of November 1943. Enjoys the confidence of President Khoury. Able, energetic and superficially likeable, but untruthful and venal; known as a sincere Nationalist. Since November 1943 he has proved himself consistently helpful to the British authorities. Was elected President of the Chamber in October 1946. Is legal adviser of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company. Re-elected Deputy in May 1947.

5. Abdulla Abou-Khater

Greek Catholic from Zahlé. Born 1888. Was twice a Deputy under the Mandate and remains a person of importance in Zahlé. Untruthful and unreliable. At present active in opposition.

6. Me. Joseph Abou-Khater

A Greek Catholic lawyer of Zahlé, born about 1905; nephew of No. 5. Studied law in France. A

leader of the anti-Skaf faction in Zahlé. Is extremely intelligent and ambitious and may have a political future if he becomes less mean and more accessible. Now Lebanese Minister in Mexico.

7. Me. Roukos Abou-Nader

A Maronite lawyer of Beskinta, born 1883. Several times a Deputy and twice a Minister; supports Emile Eddé. Influential in the Metn district, but somewhat discredited on account of his low morality. Unsuccessful in 1947 elections.

8. Ashraf Ahdab

A Sunni Moslem of Beirut. Born 1894. Has for some time been an official of the Lebanese Administration of the Finance Department. In November 1943 was made Director in succession to Nasri Haddad; Director-General in 1944. Honest and quiet, not particularly intelligent, does not mix in politics.

9. Ibrahim Ahdab

A Sunni Moslem of Beirut, born in 1902. Was a contractor and engineer until appointed in February 1944, as Lebanese representative of the Council of the *Intérêts Communs*; failed in the elections of 1943. Honest and intelligent but indecisive.

10. Fouad Ammoun

Maronite from Deir-el-Kamar. Born 1899. A magistrate until 1945, when he was appointed by Henri Pharaon, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, to a post in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Later became Director-General.

Well-educated with a broad mind, but does not appear to have any capacity for leadership. Rather an opportunist. Co-operates well with His Majesty's Legation.

11. Hussein Aoucini

Sunni Moslem of Beirut, born 1902; belongs to a modest family. At an early age engaged in commerce in Saudi Arabia where he amassed a considerable fortune and in 1945 was appointed Saudi Arabian Commercial Representative. He is connected with the Compagnie Générale de Transports, a subsidiary of Air France. A great friend of Riad Solh whom he supports financially. Clever, but little educated. Pro-German during early stages of the war. Elected Deputy for Beirut in 1947 elections.

12. *Emir Majid Arslan*

An influential Druze from Shwaifat, born about 1908. A member of Constitutional Party. Unlike most Arslans, has never been pro-Axis. Minister of Health, National Defence and Agriculture, September 1943-January 1945. During the crisis of November 1943 headed a resistance group in the mountains. Minister of National Defence and of Health May 1946. December 1946 Minister of National Defence and Post and Telegraphs, and having been successful in elections of May 1947 retained portfolios when Government reshuffled in following June. A cheerful, uneducated and highly venal feudal chieftain.

13. *Emir Nuhad Arslan*

A Druze of Shweijat. Born 1915; brother of Emir Majid Arslan. Was interned in 1942 for pro-German activities.

Has little education, but is eloquent and cunning. He is opposed to his brother in politics. A violent critic of the present régime.

Unsuccessful in 1947 elections.

14. *Shebli Aryan*

A Druze of Rachaya; born 1912; nephew of ex-Deputy Nassib Daoud with whom he is on bad terms. Uneducated, but, unlike his uncle, popular with both Druzes and Christians of Rachaya. Not wealthy but has an armed following. A supporter of the Skaf family of Zahlé. Elected Deputy in May 1947.

15. *Ahmed el Assad*

A Shia Moslem from Taibé (South Lebanon), born 1905. A feudal chieftain whose influence is paramount in the Jebel Amil. Was a Minister in the first "independent" Lebanese Government in 1941-42, but was displaced when it fell in July 1942. Re-elected a Deputy in 1943. Minister of Public Works and Minister of Health and Public Assistance January to August 1945. Minister of Defence and of Agriculture August 1945 to May 1946. He is the father-in-law of Sabri Hamadi and collaborates with Henri Pharaon and President Khoury. His chief Shia rival in South Lebanon, Adel Usseyran, is supported by Riad Solh. Dishonest, unreliable and quite unprincipled; suspected of promoting smuggling over the Palestine frontier. Desires good relations with the British authorities. Re-elected Deputy in 1947.

16. *Me. Taufiq (Toto) Awad*

A Maronite lawyer of Hasroun, born 1908. Belongs to an influential family of North Lebanon and is a relation of the Maronite Patriarch, to whom he acts as legal adviser and land broker. Contrived by doubtful methods to become a Deputy in the 1937 Chamber. By constant intrigue succeeded in 1942 in securing a reconciliation between the Maronite Patriarch and both General Catroux and President Naccache. Was appointed Assistant Secretary of State in the interim Lebanese Government in July 1943, but failed in the elections. A professional go-between, who is universally disliked and despised for his dishonesty and mendacity.

17. *Me. Ibrahim Azar*

A Maronite lawyer of Sidon, born 1906. A member of the Constitutional Party and a former Deputy. Not over-intelligent. Is an intimate of the presidential family; associate of Ahmed el Assad. Successful in 1947 elections (ballotage) but unpopular in his constituency of South Lebanon.

18. *Dr. Raif Bellama*

A Maronite bacteriologist of Beirut, born 1897. Is a professor at the American University of Beirut. Until recently has taken no part in political life. Has strong pan-Arab leanings. Honest, intelligent, and a good orator, but not an outstanding personality, on good terms with the President. Stood for Beirut in 1947 elections and was successful.

19. *Rashid Beydun*

A Shia of Beirut; born about 1897; uneducated. Elected a Deputy in 1943 on list of Riad Solh. In year 1937 visited Africa where he collected a large sum of money from Shia emigrants for the education of his co-religionists in the Lebanon. Founded the "Al-Ameliah School" in Beirut. Popular, and his work is appreciated. Successful in 1947 elections when he stood for Beirut.

20. *Abdullah Beyhum*

A Sunni Moslem from Beirut, born about 1873. Was Secretary of State in 1934, in 1939-41, and in the interim Lebanese Government appointed in July 1943. Past his prime; maintains close relations with the French Legation.

21. *Amin Beyhum*

A Sunni Moslem landowner of Beirut, born 1907. Has not so far held office, but is considered one of the most prominent younger Moslems, and is likely to emerge as a political figure. He is a nationalist, but is critical of the President and the Solh family. On good terms with Henri Pharaon and Abdel Hamid Kerami. Unsuccessful in 1947 elections.

22. *Mohammed Ali Beyhum*

A Sunni Moslem of Beirut, born 1889. Brother of No. 19. Prominent in Moslem political circles, but has never been a Deputy. Well-meaning and pleasant but ineffective.

23. *Omar Beyhum*

A Sunni Moslem proprietor of Beirut, born 1881. A former Deputy. Has some influence in Beirut Moslem circles. Brusque and uneducated, but honest and consistent in his Nationalist views. Has recently taken the lead (with Habib Trad) in a campaign for reforms and is critical of the President. Is a close friend of Henri Pharaon; a longstanding opponent of Riad Solh.

Since the failure of his nephew Amin Beyhum in the 1947 elections, has played a prominent part in opposition activities and is closely associated with Abdel Hamid Kerami.

24. *Salah Beyhum*

A Sunni Moslem of Beirut, born 1895. Brother of Abdullah Beyhum. Has so far held no office, but has some influence in Moslem circles. A Nationalist, holds pan-Arab ideas. Like all the Beyhums is anti-Riad Solh.

25. *Me. Jawad Boulos*

A Maronite solicitor of Tripoli, born 1900. Ex-Deputy; was Minister for Foreign Affairs in the provisional Lebanese Government of March 1943, but was eliminated with it in July. In the past a servile tool of the French, to whose support he owes his position in the Kadisha Electric Company in Tripoli. Unsuccessfully contested the 1943 elections. Is now anxious to co-operate with the Nationalists. Intelligent and well educated.

26. *Me. Philippe Negib Boulos*

A Greek Orthodox lawyer from Koura (North Lebanon), born 1902. Has held various magisterial

offices. In 1941 was appointed by the Vichy authorities a member of President Naccache's Administration, and held office in the first two "independent" Lebanese Governments, in the second of which he was Minister for Foreign Affairs. Failed in the 1943 elections, and resumed his post of judge of the Court of Appeal. Resigned judgeship in January 1947 to re-enter politics, but was unsuccessful in the May elections. A supporter of Abdel Hamid Kerami. Weak and ineffective, but honest and likeable.

27. *Me. Camille Chamoun*

A Maronite lawyer from Deir el Kamar, born 1901. Once a Minister; a prominent member of the Constitutional Party. Strongly pro-British and for this reason was viewed with suspicion by the French. Very influential in the Chouf district. Appointed Minister of the Interior and Posts and Telegraphs in September 1943; one of the Ministers arrested by the French in November 1943. In July 1944 appointed first Lebanese Minister in London, where he represented his country with distinction. Appointed Minister of Finance in December 1946 and returned to take up appointment in March 1947 with enhanced prestige. Embarked on a campaign to "clean up" the Government and co-operated with elements outside the Constitutional Party, e.g., Kamal Jumblat. A candidate for the presidency in 1949, he is anxious to eliminate as many as possible of President Khoury's personal supporters. Successful in the elections of May 1947, but has lost a great deal of his popularity with the general public since his return to local politics owing to his inability to break openly with the President. Appointed Minister of the Interior in June 1947.

Honest, able and extremely likeable, but probably somewhat spoilt by his success in London. Inclined to take his responsibilities too lightly; much given to female society. Sincerely pro-British.

28. *Camille Youssef Chamoun*

A Maronite from Deir-el-Kamar. Born 1903. Now owner of *Saout-el-Ahrar*, which he formerly edited, and is devoted to Emile Eddé. Is intelligent and, as journalists go, can be labelled as "honest."

29. *Joseph Chamoun*

A Maronite banker of Zahlé; born about 1882. Settled in Brazil where he amassed a considerable fortune. Director of the Electric Company of Zahlé and owns most of its shares. Comes from a pro-French family, but has himself been little interested in politics. Elected Deputy in May 1947. Uneducated, honest.

30. *Joseph Chamoun*

A Maronite from Deir-el-Kamar, born 1896. Brother of Camille Chamoun, a civil servant of long experience. In November 1943 he was appointed Director of Public Works; became Director-General in 1944. Honest and hard-working; does not mix in politics.

31. *Yusef Charbel*

A Maronite of Hosh-el-Newar of the Bekka, born 1896. Made his career as a magistrate specialising in the examining branch; Attorney-General in 1943. Honest and well educated, but brusque and is known to be an opportunist. Often consulted by President Khoury and by Ministers on political matters.

32. *General Fouad Chehab*

A Maronite from Beirut. Born 1901. Served in the French Army and was made Officer Com-

manding Lebanese troops when the Troupes Spéciales were handed over to the Lebanese Government in 1945.

Is married to a French wife and is devoted to Sheikh Béchara el Khoury. Honest but not very intelligent.

33. *Emir Jemil Chehab*

A Maronite from Beirut, born 1898. Belongs to the Christian branch of a leading Lebanese family. Director of Finance from 1921-42, and from September 1943 senior Lebanese member on the Conseil Supérieur des Intérêts Communs. Was delegated by Riad Solh in 1944 to run the Ministry of Supply, but resigned at the end of the year and was subsequently appointed Director-General of Customs. A hard-working and conscientious but exceedingly obstinate and narrow-minded official, who periodically quarrels with his superiors.

34. *Emir Khaled Chehab*

A Sunni Moslem from Hasbaya, born 1891. Belongs to the Moslem branch of the Chehab family and is prominent in South Lebanon. Has been Prime Minister and President of the Chamber; was a member of Dr. Ayoub Tabet's interim Government appointed in March 1943. After a period of retirement is now taking an interest in politics. Collaborates with Ahmed el Assad. Stood down in favour of Riad Solh during elections of May 1947. Appointed Mohafez, North Lebanon, in August 1947. Honest and respected, but weak and easily led.

35. *Michel Chiha*

A Roman Catholic banker of Beirut, born 1893. A member of the Board of Administration of the Banque de Syrie. Was Deputy in 1926, at which time he assisted in the drafting of the Lebanese Constitution. A brother-in-law of the President and relative of Henri Pharaon, has long been power behind the Constitutional Party. Virtually directs the policy of Henri Pharaon and in major issues is always consulted by the President, of whom, however, he has of late become critical. The local "Eminence grise." Formerly an advocate of a Christian Lebanon protected against Moslem domination, is now in favour of the maintenance of the Lebanon as at present constituted, as favouring the continued influence of his family and the exclusion of their rival Emile Eddé. He is owner of *Le Jour* (to which he contributes a signed article daily) and, until it ceased publication, of the *Eastern Times*. A man of wide culture (chiefly Latin), retiring and studious by nature and deeply religious, he is politically far-seeing though somewhat handicapped by his aloofness. A Jesuit in outlook. Though imbued with French culture and in favour of close relations (particularly economic) with France on the basis of independence, he is pro-British and has at intervals written statesman-like articles in his newspaper (e.g., in connexion with Anglo-Egyptian dispute). Anti-Zionist and anti-Communist. While disposed to co-operate with neighbouring Arab States on the basis of the Arab League, he is fundamentally suspicious of Moslem influence—a sentiment which colours his whole political philosophy—and his pro-British sympathies are tempered by some distrust of British pro-Moslem policy.

A shrewd and cautious financier; respected but not popular.

36. *Ahmed Daouk*

A Sunni Moslem of Beirut, born 1889. Brother of No. 37. After many years in the Beirut Municipality was appointed Secretary of State in the

Administration appointed by the Vichy authorities in 1941. Became Prime Minister of the first "independent" Lebanese Government in December 1941, but resigned in July 1942. While in office proved himself incompetent and servile and has lost much of his influence in Moslem circles. In July 1944 was appointed first Lebanese Minister to France.

37. Omar Daouk

A Sunni Moslem of Beirut, born 1865. President of the Chamber of Commerce and a highly respected proprietor who is prominent in Moslem charitable activities. Ex-Senator; nowadays takes no active part in politics, but is often consulted, and has much influence. Honest and shrewd.

38. Badr Dimishkieh

A Sunni Moslem of Beirut, born 1878. Has been president of Beirut municipality. Has relations with Palestine Jews through his son-in-law, who is a merchant of Jaffa. Venal and a hypocrite. Father of Nadim Dimishkieh.

39. Nadim Dimishkieh

A Sunni Moslem from Beirut, son of Badr Dimishkieh. Born 1915. Well educated. Worked in the Ministry of Supplies until 1945, when he was appointed commercial attaché to the Lebanese Legation in London. Intelligent. Married to an English wife.

40. Me. Emile Eddé

A Maronite lawyer of Beirut, born 1888. President of the Republic from 1936 to 1941; has also had much ministerial experience. Elected a Deputy in 1943, but failed to obtain sufficient support to run for the presidency. Accepted office as temporary Head of the State during the French *coup d'Etat* in November 1943, in the planning of which he participated. Was consequently expelled from the Chamber in March 1944. Was a member of the Lebanese deputation to Paris in 1919 to ask for a French mandate, and has always had close relations with the French authorities, who have always regarded him as their chief Lebanese supporter, but would support any Power whose policy furthered his designs. Though at heart a fanatical exponent of the concept of an independent Lebanon separate from the Arab world, he has recently proclaimed his willingness to cooperate with the Arab States on the basis of the Arab League Covenant. Believes the present Christian-Moslem Lebanon "unnatural" and that it can only survive if guaranteed by some foreign Power. He is now flirting with the supporters of Greater Syria project to which he would probably not object if King Abdullah guaranteed the independence of the little Lebanon (purely Christian and under his thumb), and professes pro-British sentiments. Very intelligent and persuasive, but is impulsive, lacks judgment, and is none too scrupulous in his methods of enlisting support. The *bête noire* of President Khoury. Unsuccessful in 1947 elections.

41. Mohammed el Fadel

Born 1912; landowner from Nabatieh. Minister from July 1944 to January 1945, with portfolios of Commerce and Industry, and Posts and Telegraphs. Received a primary education only. Has little character and is thought to be completely under the influence of Ahmed el Assad. Re-elected Deputy in May 1947.

42. Nassouh Agha el Fadel

A Sunni Moslem, born 1883. A landowner of the Danieh district (North Lebanon), where his influence is predominant. A former Deputy. Failed in the 1943 elections when he was a candidate on the anti-Nationalist list. Elected Deputy in May 1947.

43. Dr. Samih Fakhoury

A Sunni Moslem from Beirut, born 1881. Ex-Deputy. Inconsistent in his political allegiances. A relative of the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, who stayed with him on his flight from Palestine; is in touch with Emile Eddé.

44. Me. Hamid Frangieh

A Maronite lawyer from Zghorta, born 1905. Was Minister for Foreign Affairs in the first "independent" Lebanese Government of 1941-42 and had previously held ministerial posts. Re-elected Deputy in September 1943. Minister of Finance July 1944 to January 1945. Minister for Foreign Affairs and Education August 1945 to May 1946. His attempts to promote Lebanese independence and his close collaboration with the British rendered him for a time *persona non grata* to the French. His relations with the French have much improved, particularly since his visit to Paris in the spring of 1946 when he negotiated the evacuation agreement, and he has recently been appointed legal adviser to the French-controlled company Seriac. The outstanding Christian politician in North Lebanon; a close supporter of Riad Solh and in general agreement with the President, but on bad terms with Henri Pharaon; the principal opponent of Abdel Hamid Kerami in the north. Successful in elections of May 1947, and in June appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Education.

Intelligent, honest, able and has the courage of his convictions, though not always sound in judgment; well qualified to become a political force in the future. Rather conceited. Pro-British on the whole, but is an advocate of non-discrimination and neutrality. A possible candidate for the presidency in 1949. Minister for Foreign Affairs and Education August 1945.

45. Moussa de Freige

A Roman Catholic of Beirut; born 1910. Nephew of Madame Béchara el Khoury and related to Henri Pharaon whose lead he follows. Unpopular particularly among Moslems. Failed in 1943 elections, but was successful in May 1947. Wealthy (prominent race-horse owner).

46. Pierre Gemayel

A Maronite from Bikfaya, born about 1909. Leader of the Phalange Party and affects extreme Lebanese Nationalist and pro-Christian views. Although subject to Jesuit influence, he wholeheartedly supported the Government during the crisis of November 1943, and is now playing an increasingly important rôle in Lebanese politics. On good terms with Henri Pharaon and Jamal Jumblat. A loud advocate for reform and honest administration. A hot-headed and rather unbalanced demagogue.

47. Nicola Ghosn

A Greek Orthodox landowner of Kosba, North Lebanon, born in 1882. Has been a Deputy three times. Until 1943 was a follower of Emile Eddé and considered wholly under French influence, but rallied to Abdel Hamid Kerami for the 1943 elections. Uneducated and speaks no foreign language. Deputy Prime Minister in Kerami Cabinet

January to August 1945, holding portfolios of Commerce and Industry and Posts and Telegraphs. Elected Vice-President of Chamber of Deputies October 1945. Lost his seat in 1947 elections. His honesty is questionable and he has little influence even in his district.

48. Nasri Haddad

A Roman Catholic of Beirut, born 1896. Served for many years in the Finance Department of the French High Commission. In 1941 was appointed Director of Finance; became Director of Supply. Honest and capable, but was wholly under French influence. Is now Director of the National Lottery Department in the Ministry of Finance.

49. Ibrahim Haidar

A Shia Moslem from Labwé (Bekaa), born 1888. Several times Minister; his last such post, in 1937, terminated owing to his alleged connexion with a hashish racket. A leading member of one of the two principal Shia families of the Bekaa. Re-elected a Deputy in September 1943 and again in May 1947. Shrewd, but shifty and dishonest. Critical of present régime to a point of favouring the Greater Syria project but utterly lacks the courage of his convictions.

50. George Haimari

A Maronite from Beirut, born 1898. Was Chief of the President's Secretariat from 1920 to 1943 and served successive masters faithfully. Inclined to favour Emile Eddé. Appointed Director of Education when Sheikh Béchara el Khoury became President in September 1943, but returned as Chief of President's Secretariat in the summer of 1945, and now enjoys President Khoury's confidence. Pro-British and most co-operative. Made O.B.E. in 1947.

51. Sabri Hamadi

A Shia Moslem proprietor of Hermel (Bekaa), born about 1903. Is head of the most prominent Bekaa family. Son-in-law of Ahmad el Assad. Was elected Deputy at an early age and was a Minister in 1938. Has little education and is wholly unprincipled, but has always been pandered to on account of his nuisance value in the remote North Bekaa region. Elected Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies in October 1943 and re-elected to the same office in October 1944 and October 1945, but defeated by Habib Abi Chahla in October. Appointed Minister for the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister in December 1946. Re-elected Deputy in May 1947 and elected Speaker for a second time in the following June.

Close collaborator of Henri Pharaon, on whose list he was re-elected Deputy in 1943.

52. Joseph Hrawi

Maronite, born in Zahlé in 1893. Agriculturalist. Entered political life on the occasion of the 1943 elections when he appeared on the list of Henri Pharaon. Until his appointment in May 1946 as Minister of Agriculture and Posts and Telegraphs, his activities had been more or less confined to acting as courier between his electors and the various Government departments. Uneducated; curries favour with the Communists. Dropped by Henri Pharaon in 1947 elections.

53. Sayed Ahmed el Hussein

A Shia Moslem from Akoura (Bekaa), born 1888. Has several times been Minister, but has usually resigned on personal grounds after a short time in office. Re-elected Deputy in September 1943

as Shia Deputy for Mount Lebanon. Minister of Justice May-December 1946. Re-elected Deputy in May 1947 and appointed Minister of Justice in June. An honest, old-school official, influential in Shia circles and generally respected, but uneducated and muddle-headed.

54. Aref Bey Ibrahim

A Moslem Circassian from Smyrna, born 1887. Was in the Turkish police at the end of 1914-18 war. Appointed Head of Judicial Police in Beirut on first Allied occupation; was dismissed in 1932 and spent one and a half years in prison under accusation of bribery; acquitted when tried. Chief of Police 1943 to 1945, when he was attached to the Ministry of the Interior as adviser on police matters. Appointed in June 1946 as liaison officer with Palestine C.I.D. Retired early in 1947. A clever police officer, comparatively honest and fairly loyal.

55. Sheikh Sayed Istephan

Maronite, born 1892. Brother of No. 56. Owes his position to his brother's influence, and is on good terms with Abdel Hamid Kerami. Influential in Maronite circles in North Lebanon.

56. Sheikh Yusef Istephan

A Maronite of Kafar Saghab (North Lebanon), born 1886. Was once a Minister and a supporter of Emile Eddé, but rallied to the Nationalists prior to the 1943 elections when he was successful. Very influential in his district; once successfully toured Australia, where many of his family are settled. A very critical supporter of the Government and an associate of Abdel Hamid Kerami. Unsuccessful in 1947 elections.

57. Kamal Jumblat

Born 1914. Belongs to one of the two leading Druze families of Mount Lebanon. Elected Deputy in 1943 on the list of Emile Eddé. Is opposed to President Khoury and the Constitutionals who favour the Druze family of Arslan. During 1946 became associated politically with Henri Pharaon and his prestige increased accordingly. Minister of National Economy and Agriculture in December 1946 to June 1947. His efforts to reduce prices and his outspoken denunciation of political and administrative corruption won him considerable popular support. Collaborated with Camille Chamoun in 1947 elections—was successful.

Well educated but inclined to be a theorist, honest, hard-working, shy. Is under the influence of his mother, Sitt Nazira Jumblat, a formidable politically minded woman, who, during the mandatory period was pro-French, but is now anxious to revive her family's traditional friendship with the British.

58. Joseph Karam

A Maronite of Zgorta (North Lebanon), born 1899. A rather weak character who is overshadowed by Hamid Frangieh and Jawad Boulos, both of the same district. Pro-French and a supporter of Emile Eddé. Entered the Chamber on a bye-election in April 1944 with French supporter. An associate of Abdel Hamid Kerami, was eventually taken on Hamid Frangieh's list in the 1947 elections and was successful.

59. Abdel Hamid Kerami

A Sunni Moslem of Tripoli, born 1891. At one time Mufti of Tripoli, but was dismissed by the French in 1920 on account of his hostile attitude towards the French Mandate. Was a close friend

of Haj Amin Hussaini but, unlike some members of his family, was not pro-Axis. Has a large following and can count on the support of the majority of Moslems in Tripoli on any major issue, such as pan-Arabism or the demand for union with Syria. Is wealthy and possesses much property. Formerly a strong partisan of the incorporation of the Lebanon in Syria. Refused to co-operate with any Lebanese Government, but in 1943 modified his views to the extent of entering the Chamber. Strongly supported the Government of Riad Solh, and was arrested by the French during the crisis of November 1943. Prime Minister January to August 1945, also holding portfolios of Finance and National Defence; during this period he lost some of his popularity in Tripoli by his refusal to reward his followers at the expense of his opponents, but succeeded in gaining a measure of support among the Christians. Subsequently became openly critical of President Khoury and the régime in general and an advocate of constitutional and administrative reform. In opposition to Riad Solh and his associates in North Lebanon, particularly Hamid Frangieh, has co-operated with Henri Pharaon who has, however, failed to reconcile him with President Khoury. Has continued to lose influence and has allowed his opponents to exploit his feud with a local Tripoli family. Threatens to retire from Lebanese politics, professing his belief that the Lebanese experiment has failed and his wish to revert to his pre-1943 policy. Refused to stand as a candidate in the 1947 elections and is now a pillar of the extra-parliamentary opposition.

Fairly well educated and not unintelligent but excitable, and a poor politician. Honest. Pro-British.

60. *Rafaat Kazaoun*

A Sunni Moslem of Qabb Elias (Bekaa), born about 1908. Elected a Deputy in September 1943. Caught by British military authorities transporting illegal arms in October 1945; nevertheless, was shortly afterwards elected Secretary to the Chamber of Deputies. Re-elected Deputy in May 1947. Ambitious, fanatical and vengeful.

61. *Lieut.-Colonel Jamil Khatib*

A Sunni Moslem from Shihin, born 1900. Has commanded Lebanese gendarmerie from February 1946 to July 1947. Uneducated and vengeful.

62. *Michel Khattar*

A Greek Catholic manufacturer from Deir el Kamar, born 1889. President of the Silk-Growers' and Industrialists' Associations. Has held no office but has much political sense, which causes him often to be consulted by Ministers in office. Strongly pro-British and has co-operated well with us but has commercial connexions with the French. Very likeable, with an unusually strong and independent character. Is now an invalid.

63. *Sheikh Farid el Khazeh*

A Maronite landowner of Jounieh, born 1895. A smuggler in his younger days and nowadays a gambler. Ex-Deputy. A member of the Constitutional Party and influential in the Kesrouan district. Shrewd and amusing but uneducated and unscrupulous. Re-entered the Chamber on a by-election in April 1944. Re-elected Deputy in May 1947.

64. *Izzat Khorshid*

A Sunni Moslem of Beirut, of Tcherkess origin. Born 1902, and was employed until 1944 as an interpreter in the French Haut Commissariat. Served for a short while during 1944 in the Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs; early in 1946 was appointed Chief of Lebanese Police; later returned to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as "chef du protocole." Pleasant but a lightweight.

65. *Sheikh Béchara el Khoury*

A Maronite lawyer from Beirut, born 1891. For many years a bitter political rival of Emile Eddé, by whom he was beaten for the presidency in 1935. Leader of the Constitutional Party and several times Prime Minister. Achieved his consuming ambition by becoming President in 1943. Behaved with firmness and dignity when arrested by the French in November of that year, but has since relapsed into his old failings of weakness and hesitancy. In the eyes of the public he is identified with the present régime and its shortcomings inevitably reflect on him. He is connected by marriage with the Chiha and Pharaon families which, together with his own, are popularly regarded as the ultimate rulers of the country and it is widely believed that their ambitions and financial interests are the yard-stick of policy. In the commercial field his brother Fouad has succeeded in considerably increasing the family fortune; politically and in administrative matters his brother Selim is believed to be almost all powerful.

He is a shrewd politician but is not a strong character. Inclined to complacency from which he is only shaken periodically by his anxiety lest he be replaced by Eddé. His main ambition is to be re-elected President in 1949. Though he carries little weight with the public in large, he is probably the strongest single influence in the political field and in spite of his faults is the most powerful factor for stability in the present Lebanon.

Genuinely pro-British—he is unlikely to forget the attitude of His Majesty's Government in the Franco-Lebanese crisis in 1943—he is anxious to help and has done us many a good turn.

66. *Dr. Elias Khoury*

A Maronite of Wadi-Shahrour, Mount Lebanon, born in 1898. Minister of Health and Education December 1946–June 1947 when he authorised the formation of the Franco-Lebanese Medical Association. Graduate of the French University of Beirut. Director of the French hospital, Sacré Cœur, and the Bahannes Sanatorium. Friend and blind supporter of President Khoury. A prominent supporter of the Constitutional Party since 1932; he entered active politics in December 1946 when, though not a Deputy, joined the Riad Solh Cabinet. Successful in elections of May 1947. Honest and well-meaning.

67. *Kabalan Issa Khoury*

A Maronite proprietor of Ainata (Bekaa), born 1915. Is a relative of the Maronite Patriarch, whose influence he uses freely. Resides in Beirut. Used to grow much hashish on his properties. An active and ambitious young man, but wholly unprincipled. An inveterate smuggler.

68. *Pierre Khoury*

Maronite from Beirut, born 1915. A cousin of Sheikh Béchara el Khoury, who appointed him his private secretary in 1946. Effeminate.

69. *Sami el Khoury*

A Maronite of Beirut, born 1895. Brother of President Khoury. Chief Clerk in the Lebanese Directorate of Justice until 1926, when he was appointed Director of Justice; in 1937 appointed by Emile Eddé as President of the "Conseil d'Etat"; became Director-General of Foreign Affairs in 1944; appointed minister to Cairo 1945. Honest and disciplined but of medium intelligence.

70. *Selim el Khoury*

A Maronite of Rashmaya, born 1896. Brother of the President Khoury. Gained very considerable influence by his activity behind the scenes and consequently unpopular except with those who were benefited by his intervention. Openly attacked by Camille Chamoun. He insisted on standing for elections in May 1947 (apparently against the wishes of the President who wished to avoid a split in the Constitutional Party) and was successful. Cunning and stubborn.

71. *Victor Khoury*

A Maronite from Hadad, born 1903. Practised as a lawyer until 1944, when he was appointed as counsellor to the Lebanese Legation in London. Appointed Lebanese Minister in London in 1947 in succession to Camille Chamoun.

72. *Emile Lahoud*

A Maronite from Baabda (Mount Lebanon), born 1897. Lawyer. Member of Constitutional Party. Elected Deputy in 1943. Minister of Finance August 1945–December 1946. Also Minister of Interior April to May 1945.

Highly intelligent but lazy. A good orator. Compromised his reputation while in office when it is believed in succeeded in lining his pocket and was, owing to the insistence of Camille Chamoun, rejected from the Constitutional Party list in the 1947 elections. Stood as candidate on the unofficial Constitutional list of Sheikh Selim Khoury, but was unsuccessful.

73. *Dr. Charles Malik*

A Greek Orthodox from North Lebanon, born 1906. Appointed first Lebanese Minister to Washington in March 1945. A graduate of the American University in Beirut and Doctor in Philosophy Harvard University. From 1942 to 1945 was Professor of Philosophy and Science at the American University in Beirut.

Before his appointment as Minister took no part in politics, his interests being wholly academic.

74. *Jamil Mikkawi*

A Sunni Moslem lawyer of Beirut, born 1911. Was leader of the Najjadé Party, in which capacity he had a certain nuisance value, until July 1943, when his failure to conform to the attitude of the Moslem leaders on the electoral issue lost him most of his popularity and the majority of the party seceded to a rival leader. A pretentious young coxcomb, who is not unintelligent but lacks stability. Married to a Frenchwoman. Appointed counsellor to the Lebanese Legation in London in July 1944. Appointed chargé d'affaires in Switzerland in 1945.

75. *Mukhtar Mokayish*

A Sunni Moslem from Beirut, born 1901 of a well-known family. Practised as a lawyer until 1942, when he was interned for his pro-German activities. Appointed as counsellor to the Lebanese

Legation in Washington in 1945; went to Angora in March 1946, as Lebanese Chargé d'Affaires. A fanatical Moslem, extremely intelligent with a good education.

76. *Moussa Moubarek*

A Maronite of Antura, born 1903. Member of the staff of the French Delegate to the Lebanon from 1923–41, during which time he played an important part in Franco-Lebanese politics as principal French go-between. Director of Public Instruction 1941; became "chef de Cabinet" to President Khoury in 1943. In spite of his close associations with the French, his attitude during the November 1943 crisis was correct and he is now a "good Lebanese." Appointed Lebanese President of the *Intérêts Communs* in 1944. Clever and intelligent. A personal friend of the President. Co-operates well with British officials but continues to have pro-French leanings.

77. *Michel Moufarrej*

Greek Orthodox of Bishmizzin, Kura, North Lebanon; born 1893. Moderately educated. A capable business man (he has considerable trade connexions with British firms and has amassed a considerable fortune). Entered political life in the elections of May 1947, when having bought his rivals off at considerable expense he was taken on as a candidate on the list of Hamid Frangieh and was successful. Staunchly pro-British. Speaks English well.

78. *Saadi Munla*

Sunni Moslem from Tripoli, born 1895. Belongs to a prominent Tripoli family. Owns considerable real estate and also a soap factory. Studied in Istanbul. Was elected Deputy in 1943 on Abdel Hamid Kerami's list. Minister of Justice and National Economy in the Kerami and Sami Solh Cabinets. Prime Minister in 1946 in the absence of a stronger candidate. Successful in 1947 elections. Moderately well-educated, honest, but not over-intelligent. Rather colourless.

79. *Gabriel Murr*

A Greek Orthodox Deputy for Mount Lebanon; born 1895. Originally of Btigrin and now of Beirut. Lived in the United States for ten years and served during the first world war in United States army. Returned to Lebanon in 1922 and started a cinema business which is still flourishing. Entered political life for first time in September 1943, when he was elected Deputy for Mount Lebanon on Emil Eddé's list. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works in Sami Solh Government August 1945 to May 1946. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works in Saadi Munla Government May 1946. Retained portfolio of Public Works when Riad Solh Government formed in December 1946 (having been successful in the elections) June 1947. On good terms with United States Legation; patriotic, not very intelligent, honest and well meaning.

80. *Alfred Naccache*

A Maronite of Beirut, born 1889. An unsuccessful lawyer, who has held magisterial posts since 1925 and was President of the Court of Appeal. Was unexpectedly nominated head of the Lebanese Administration by the Vichy authorities in 1941, having held no previous administrative post. Continued in office after the Allied occupation and was nominated President of the Republic by General Catroux in November 1941. Much under Jesuit influence, and widely unpopular. Very honest, but

impulsive, volatile, and incapable. Accepted dismissal by General Catroux in March 1943. Elected a Deputy in September 1943, and has since been active member of the small pro-French opposition group. Unsuccessful in elections of May 1947.

81. Adib Nahas

A Greek Orthodox of Tripoli, born 1903. Comes of a leading Christian family in North Lebanon. A senior Government official who has filled many posts, including that of Director of the Interior in 1940; Mohafez of South Lebanon during the 1941 campaign and rendered great assistance to the British; reappointed Director of the Interior in November 1943, and later promoted to Director-General. Probably the best of the Lebanese civil servants, honest, intelligent and capable. Pro-British and never fails to co-operate with British officials. Made O.B.E. in 1947.

82. Gibran Nahas

A Greek Orthodox of Tripoli, born 1891. Was formerly Mohafez of North Lebanon and is a prominent figure in that district. Ex-Deputy. Under French influence in the past; of mediocre intelligence.

83. Wadih Naim

A Maronite lawyer of Chih near Beirut, born 1880. A former leader of the Beirut Bar, took no part in politics before the 1943 elections in which he became a Deputy for Mount Lebanon on the Constitutional list. Minister of Interior and of Education January to August 1945, and headed Lebanese delegation to San Francisco in April 1945. Re-elected Deputy in 1947. Bears a good reputation, but is considered of mediocre intelligence.

84. Alfred Nasr

A Greek Catholic merchant and insurance agent of Beirut, born 1878. President of the Merchants' Association. Has taken no part in political life. A typical, shrewd, grasping, short-sighted Beirut merchant.

85. Sulaiman Naufal, General

A Greek Catholic of Merjayun, born 1900. Spent two years at the French Ecole de Guerre, was an officer in the Chasseurs Libanais until 1941, when he became head of the Lebanese gendarmerie. During the Lebanese crisis of November 1943, worked with the French and was consequently removed from his post, but soon re-established himself and was appointed Director of the Ministry of Supply and co-operated successfully with the Allied economic controls. Later became Director-General of the Ministry of National Economy. Is also Chief of Staff (nominal) of the Security Forces. Appointed Minister of National Economy in June 1947. A capable officer and an efficient administrator.

86. Muhieddin Nsouli

A Sunni Moslem journalist and merchant of Beirut, born 1900. Proprietor of the newspaper *Beirut*. Ex-Deputy. During the 1928 Palestine troubles wrote violent anti-British articles and in 1941 was interned as an Axis sympathiser, but while interned wrote strongly pro-Allied articles and on his release continued to collaborate effectively. Has political ambitions. An average Beirut journalist.

87. Izzedin Omari

A Sunni Moslem of Iraqi origin, born about 1887. Was for several years a judge and has been governor of various districts. Was Chief of Police from 1935

to 1937, when he was retired as a result of a scandal; was reinstated in the same position in 1942, but again dismissed in October 1943. Active and a disciplinarian, but venal and subservient; consequently not respected.

88. Henri Pharaon

A Greek Catholic banker of Beirut, born 1902. Socially prominent and a leading racehorse owner. Popular amongst the middle and lower classes, especially Moslems, and in the past encouraged the Nejjadeh (Moslem Youth Organisation). Ostentatiously generous and hospitable. Contributed to finances of Constitutional Party of President Khoury, to whom he is related through the Chiha family, and bought himself into the Chamber in September 1943 as a Deputy for the Beqaa district. Worked behind the scenes until January 1945 when he was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Justice. Was in office until August 1945. Reappointed Minister for Foreign Affairs in December 1946. Aspires to the presidency in succession to Sheikh Béchara el Khoury. Has made great efforts to extend his influence through elements outside the Constitutional Party (e.g., Kamal Jumblat, the Phalangists) and has as a result had clashes with the President, of whom he has been on occasion openly critical. In spite of his personal ambition, his chief loyalty is to the Pharaon-Chiha-Khoury family connexion and is their representative in the Chamber. Has come up against Riad Solh whom he personally dislikes and distrusts. Collaborates with Riad Solh's opponents, Abdul Hamid Kerameh, Omar Beyhum, Ahmed el Assad and Abdullah Yafi. Much under the influence of Michel Chiha whose views he shares. Suspicious of Moslem influence and of the Arab League. Anti-Communist and is honorary president of the Anti-Communist "Labour Front" of Trade Unions; pro-British but uneasy about British pro-Moslem policy. Tends to favour the instinctive Lebanese attitude of non-discrimination and neutrality.

Intelligent, ambitious but impetuous and somewhat arrogant. Re-elected Deputy in 1947.

89. Nasser Raad

Sunni Moslem from Sir, born 1905. Practised as a magistrate until 1946, when he was appointed as public prosecutor to the Lebanese Military Court and given the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Appointed Chief of Lebanese Police September 1946; is married to a German.

90. Dr. Moustafa Rifai

A Sunni Moslem of Baalbeck, born about 1895. A well-educated and strict Moslem of an old Syrian family, descendants of the Prophet. Kind, simple-hearted, and much respected. His political tendency is towards Damascus and the National Bloc.

91. Amin Saad

A Maronite of Ain Traz, born 1898. Nephew of a former President, by virtue of which relationship he became a Minister in the first "independent" Lebanese Government, but proved a complete failure and is unlikely to hold further office. A foolish and negligible character. Re-elected a Deputy in 1943 on Eddé's list and was one of the small group of Opposition Deputies in the Chamber. Is on good terms with Kamal Jumblat.

92. Ali Salam

A Sunni Moslem proprietor of Beirut, born 1897. The eldest of the eight sons of the late Salim Salam, a follower of King Feisal; professes pan-Arab and

pro-British ideas and has some influence. A bumptious and rather tiresome person, who has, however, never wavered in his support for the British cause.

93. Saib Salam

A younger brother of No. 72, less forceful but more reasonable. Elected a Deputy in September 1943, and is regarded as the most prominent of the younger Moslems. Pro-British and anti-Communist. Intelligent and able, but is handicapped by the mercenary activities of his brother. Withdrew his candidature in 1947 elections.

94. Anis Saleh

Maronite from Antelias near Beirut, born 1907. A magistrate since 1930, and has spent most of his time in the Inspectorate of Justice. Appointed Director of the Ministry of Justice in August 1946, later Director-General.

Very clever, a hard worker, and believed to be honest but something of an opportunist. Most co-operative.

95. Joseph Salem

A Greek Catholic of Tyre, born 1895. Manager of the Beirut Water Company and in 1946 appointed a director of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban. Has considerable political influence in South Lebanon. Has Nationalist leanings and was always closely associated with Riad Solh. Lebanese Minister in Cairo 1944 to August 1945. Minister of Interior August 1945 to April 1946. When on his return from Paris (he was a member of the Lebanese delegation which negotiated the Evacuation Agreement) he resigned following a disagreement with the President.

Honest and intelligent, well-balanced and far sighted but not over courageous. On good terms with His Majesty's Legation. Unsuccessful in 1947 elections; now on bad terms with Riad Solh.

96. Joseph Saouda

Born 1888, graduate of the French University in Beirut and licencié en droit of the University of Paris. 1909 to 1922 practised law at the Mixed Court of Appeal at Alexandria. Helped to found the Alliance Libanaise d'Egypte, a movement to promote Lebanese independence, and eventually became its president. In 1923 he moved to the Court of Appeal at Beirut and two years later he was elected a Deputy. He lost his seat in 1937 and his newspaper was suspended by the French High Commissioner in 1938; since then he has taken no active part in politics. He has, however, written numerous studies on legal and political questions affecting the Lebanon which on occasion have had political repercussions.

He is fanatical Christian and fears Moslem domination, but at the same time has consistently opposed French domination of the Lebanon. He is not wholly trustworthy and is inclined to be argumentative, but is very intelligent and well-disposed to us. Appointed Lebanese Minister to Brazil in 1946. Stood for the 1947 elections but withdrew his candidature.

97. Ramez Sarkis

A Protestant journalist of Beirut, born 1891. Owner of the Beirut newspaper *Lisan ul Hal*. Was Minister of Education in the first "independent" Lebanese Government, but proved exceptionally incompetent and is unlikely to hold further office. Professes pro-British sentiments, having had an Anglo-Saxon education, but is a colourless personality who carries no weight.

98. Alfred Skaf

A Greek Catholic of Zahlé, born 1907. Member of a prominent Bekaa family. His appointment as Minister in the first "independent" Lebanese Government was his first introduction to public life; as Minister of Supply he tried hard, but found the problems involved too great for his mediocre intelligence and did not retain his office when the Government fell. Not over-scrupulous. Was unsuccessful in the 1943 election when he opposed Henri Pharaon in the Bekaa, and is actively engaged in extra-parliamentary opposition.

99. Joseph Skaf

A Greek Catholic of Zahlé, born 1922. Rich. Popular even among the Shias. Elected Deputy in May 1947 in South Lebanon, having stood down in favour of Henri Pharaon in his own constituency of the Bekaa.

100. Riad es Solh

A Sunni Moslem of Sidon, born 1898. Early became known as a fanatical adherent of the Arab cause, but escaped internment by the Turks in 1914-18 because his father had been a Turkish official. Governor of South Lebanon for a few months in 1919. Refused all collaboration with the mandatory authorities and was exiled by them for two months in 1935. Constantly advocated the cause of Arab independence and unity; acquired much influence amongst Moslems in the Lebanon and elsewhere, but was feared and distrusted by many Christians. Until 1943 held no Government office and generally effaced himself, to emerge periodically as a Moslem leader in a crisis. Entered the Lebanese Chamber in September 1943 and was appointed Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. At once adopted a bold Nationalist programme which, unhesitatingly pursued, brought his Government into violent conflict with the French, the November crisis resulting. Since then has proved himself an adroit negotiator and forceful debater, but with little aptitude for, or interest in, administration. Resigned the Premiership in January 1945, and soon regained some of the popularity which he lost while in office. Attracted and virtually assumed the leadership of elements opposed to Henri Pharaon and to the Pharaon-Chiha-Khoury consortium. Rivalry with Pharaon kept him out of office until December 1946, when he and Pharaon were obliged to combine to form a coalition Government strong enough to hold elections. Collaborated well with both the President and Pharaon during the electoral campaign. Re-elected Deputy (May 1947) and reformed his Government in following June.

Though at heart pan-Arab, he accepted in 1943 the experiment of a "bi-national" independent Lebanon, and, consequently, is not unpopular with the Christians.

With an Arab, almost an international reputation, he is probably the nearest Lebanese approach to a statesman. Has great personality; supple rather than strong; shrewd and an able politician. Persistently anti-French. Flirted with the Germans between 1938-40; subsequently courted the British with whom he collaborated well. Has given proof of his understanding for the British position and of his willingness to help. His main loyalty, however, is probably to his own not wholly disinterested aspirations.

101. Kazem Solh

A Sunni Moslem of Beirut, born in 1903. He is a Nationalist and is president of the National Appeal Party. A cousin of Riad Solh. Appointed

Lebanese Minister to Bagdad in 1946, but did not proceed until the summer of 1947. Honest, intelligent and well balanced.

102. *Sami es Solh*

A Sunni Moslem of Sidon, born 1891. Educated in Istanbul. In 1920 was an official of the Hejaz Railway. Cousin of No. 100. Subsequently entered the Lebanese magistrature and held several posts, including that of president of the Court of Cassation. His appointment as Prime Minister of the second "independent" Lebanese Government in July 1942 was his first introduction to political life. Plunged into a variety of undigested schemes and defied the French, but was soon brought to heel. After his dismissal in March 1943 returned to his magisterial post. Elected a Deputy in September 1943. Appointed Prime Minister also holding portfolios of Commerce and National Economy and Posts and Telegraphs August 1945. Relinquished Ministries National Economy and Posts and Telegraphs April 1946. Resigned premiership May 1946.

A well-meaning, impulsive but fundamentally foolish man whose extreme vanity makes him unreliable and a bad judge of character. Jealous of his cousin Riad Solh, a much abler man. Not unpopular with middle and lower class Moslems. Re-elected Deputy in May 1947.

103. *Ibrahim Sursock*

A prominent Greek Orthodox of Beirut, born 1912, very rich. Son of Madame Linda Sursock ("Châteline du Liban") and member of the Sursock family which with the Trads, Bostros and Tabets form the cosmopolitan aristocracy of Beirut and still retain some indirect political influence. French educated but has British connexions, especially commercial (his company are agents for Rolls Royce and Bentleys). More interested in business than in politics.

104. *Emile Tabet*

A Maronite proprietor of Beirut, born 1879. Brother of No. 106, but was long estranged from him. Has strong pro-British views, which he has expressed to any British official who would listen during the last twenty-five years. Ex-Deputy. Not nowadays taken seriously. Rich and avaricious, but good-hearted.

105. *Georges Tabet*

A Maronite landowner of Beirut, born 1891. Several times a Minister and a candidate for the presidency. President of the Maronite Council and of the Maronite Charitable Association. Since his failure in 1943 elections has lost much of his influence amongst middle and lower class Christians but notoriously untruthful and not trusted. Unsuccessful in 1947 elections.

106. *Jacques Tabet*

A Maronite landowner of Beirut, born 1887. Very rich, and socially prominent; holds views on economic problems but plays no part in political life. Unpopular on account of his meanness but not ill-intentioned.

107. *Khalil Takieddin*

Belongs to one of the leading Druze families, born in 1905. French educated, but is an Arab poet with a considerable local reputation. Entered Government service in 1925, when he was appointed Private Secretary to the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. Later transferred to Ministry

of Education where he reached the rank of Director. After two years (1941-42) in the Ministry of Supply, he returned to the Chamber as Secretary in 1943, and was subsequently promoted to be Secretary-General with the rank of Director-General in the Lebanese civil service. Appointed Lebanese Minister in Moscow in 1946.

He is a man of pleasant manners, but is inclined to be obsequious. Undoubtedly clever, he has the reputation of being an opportunist and is notoriously venal. During the 1943 November crisis went into hiding with the remnants of the Government and thereby increased his standing with the local Nationalists.

Prior to his appointment to Moscow carried favour with the Soviet Legation.

108. *Philippe Tacla*

Greek Catholic, born in Zouk Mikayl in 1914. A lawyer by profession. Well educated, intelligent, honest and well-disposed. He entered the Chamber in 1945 in the by-election following death of his brother Selim, who was Minister for Foreign Affairs. He belongs to the Constitutional Liberal Party; faithful supporter of President Khoury. Minister for Foreign Affairs May to December 1946. Re-elected Deputy May 1947.

109. *Dr. Jamil Talhouk*

A Druze landowner of Aley, born 1887. Comes of a leading Druze family which has a traditional friendship with the British. Of mediocre intelligence, shrewd and obstinate. Re-elected a Deputy in September 1943 on Eddé's list, but soon severed his connexion with him. Minister of Supplies and Minister of Agriculture January to August 1945. Minister of Health August 1945 to May 1946. Did not stand in 1947 elections.

110. *Salim Tayara*

A Sunni Moslem proprietor of Beirut, born 1887. Ex-Mayor of Beirut and has held several municipal posts. Has much influence amongst the Moslem middle classes. Honest but mediocre. Closely associated with the Salam family.

111. *Fozi Trabulsi, Colonel*

A Maronite of Dair-el-Kamar, born 1901. Lebanese gendarmerie officer until 1939, when, having quarrelled with his French chief, he left the service. Reinstated on 10th November, 1943, as Inspector-General of Lebanese gendarmerie and police. Later became Officer Commanding Public Security Forces of the Lebanese Republic, and in 1945 was promoted to full colonel. Superseded following differences with Henri Pharaon. Personal friend of Camille Chamoun. Honest and loyal, but tactless, excitable and of mediocre intelligence.

112. *Habib Trad*

A Greek Orthodox banker and landowner of Beirut, born 1885. Has held no office but is a prominent social figure who wields some influence in political and commercial circles. Hostile to President Khoury and to the present régime. In 1945 joined with Abdul Hamid Kerami, Omar Beyhum, Alfred Naccache and Jamal Jumlat in a campaign for constitutional and administrative reform. Prominent in opposition activities during 1947 elections.

113. *Me. Pierre (Petro) Trad*

A Greek Orthodox lawyer of Beirut, born 1873. Was for many years Speaker of the Lebanese Chamber. Appointed provisional Head of State in July 1943. Vain and of limited intelligence, but

prides himself on keeping on good terms with all parties and communities and has the reputation of being skilful in settling disputes. Critical of present régime.

114. *Gibran Tuéni*

A Greek Orthodox journalist of Beirut, born 1891. Owns *An-Nahar*, the leading Arabic daily, and is the best Lebanese journalist. Once a Minister. Formerly belonged to the Constitutional Party but now independent. An intelligent and outspoken critic with strong Nationalist ideas. In 1945 was elected president of the Press Syndicate. Now Lebanese minister to the Argentine.

115. *Me. Adel Usseyran*

A Shia Moslem proprietor and lawyer of Sidon, born 1903. One of the two strongest personalities of South Lebanon, the other being his rival Ahmed el Assad. Elected a Deputy in September 1943, and was appointed Minister of Supply, Commerce and Industry, but was eliminated from the Ministry in July 1944. A close associate of Riad Solh, of whom, however, he is on occasion critical. Strong Nationalist but generally pro-British. A strong character: blunt and uncompromising. Well educated (American University of Beirut). Successful in 1947 elections.

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116. *Me. Abdullah Yafi*

A Sunni Moslem lawyer of Beirut, born 1899. Was Prime Minister in 1936, re-elected a Deputy in September 1943. Formerly the only prominent Moslem follower of Emile Eddé, but has broken with him and supports the present régime. Member of Lebanese delegation to San Francisco in April 1945. Was appointed lawyer of the Banque de Syrie in 1945. Minister of Justice December 1946-June 1947, and Acting Minister of Finance until Camille Chamoun's return in March 1947. Successful in 1947 elections. A somewhat colourless, though well-intentioned person.

117. *Yusuf ez-Zain*

A Shia Moslem from Nabatiyeh, born about 1873. Deputy. Has some following in South Lebanon. Shifty and venal. Successful in 1947 elections.

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Religious Personalities

Maronites

1. *Mgr. Antoine Abed*

Maronite Archbishop of Tripoli, including the Lattakia district, born 1901. Became archbishop in 1931. Moderately cultured; interested with his brothers in commercial enterprises, very pro-French.

2. *Mgr. Boulos Akl*

Maronite Archbishop of Laodicee (Lattakia)—at one time second vicar to the Patriarch, born 1884; resides at Shammat in the Jebel district. Quarrelled with the Patriarch in 1936. Intelligent, low morality and rarely tells the truth; an intriguer with a reputation for dishonesty.

3. *His Beatitude Antoine Pierre Arida*

Maronite Patriarch, born 1863, from Becharré (North Lebanon), the largest landowner in the Lebanon; sly and crafty, sole interest is his own personal gain. Maronite Archbishop of Tripoli (Lebanon) 1908. Was elected Patriarch in 1932, his election being confirmed by the Pope the following year. Opposed French mandatory authorities on several occasions, but he still considers the French

are the natural protectors of Christians in the Levant States. His relations with the Holy See are not always cordial.

He is personally wealthy; obstinate and obtuse; little respected as a man but, nevertheless, carries considerable weight in local politics. Frequently critical of the present régime.

Received Grand Cordon of the Legion d'Honneur in 1947.

4. *Mgr. Francis Ayoub*

Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus, residing at Kornet-Shahwan, near Bikfaya, born about 1894, well educated and wealthy.

5. *Mgr. Augustin Bustani*

Maronite Archbishop of South Lebanon residing at Beit-Iddin, born in 1872 of a leading Maronite family of Deir-il-Kamar. An intelligent and well educated intriguer with a pro-French reputation; has always been a close friend of Nazira Jomblat; has shown on more than one occasion unfriendly feelings towards the British, and has been consistently opposed to Béchara Khoury.

6. *Hanna el Haj*

From Jedeidy Kisrwan, born 1885. Appointed Maronite Archbishop of Damascus 1928 (resides in Reifoun, Lebanon). Supporter of President Khoury. Suspended from office by the Vatican in 1946: he is facing charges affecting his private life. Venal and cunning.

7. *Mgr. Abdallah Khoury*

Maronite Archbishop. First vicar to Patriarch residing at Bkerke. Born about 1872, from Haifa. A relative of President Khoury. Although often critical of the present Administration, he is more favourably disposed to Lebanese independence than most of his colleagues and similarly more disposed to co-operate with the British. One of the few Maronite prelates who realises the danger of communism.

Very intelligent and highly educated but a bit of an opportunist. Has a limited influence on the Patriarch.

8. *Boulos Meoushi*

Maronite Archbishop of Haifa residing at Tyre, born 1892, from Jezzín; has been in the United States and speaks English; sensible, devout and respected; takes no part in politics.

9. *Mgr. Ignace Moubarak*

Maronite Archbishop of Beirut, born 1876, from Rachmaya (Mount Lebanon). Studied in Rome; appointed to his present See in 1919. Impulsive, courageous and somewhat quarrelsome when thwarted; critical of his Patriarch, with whom he is on indifferent terms. On several occasions publicly criticised the French and played a dignified part in the crisis of November 1943. Nationalist but not consistently so. Has made approaches to the British, but will support any authorities who will favour his community. Anti-Communist. Came out in favour of Emile Eddé in the 1947 elections and violently attacked President Khoury.

10. *Mgr. Elias Risha*

Maronite Archbishop of Baalbeck but resides in Bkerke, born 1874. Uneducated, wealthy, venal and stupid.

Greek Catholic

11. *Mgr. Youssef Kallas*

Greek Catholic Archbishop of North Lebanon residing in Tripoli, born about 1878; well educated—has a reputation for honesty, with no particular political leanings.

12. *Mgr. Youssef Malouf*

Greek Catholic Archbishop of Baalbeck and Haifa, born about 1898. Was appointed by Rome. Intelligent and ambitious; aimed at becoming the next Greek Catholic Patriarch, but as a result of supporting the French after November 1943 is not acceptable to the Lebanese authorities. Visited North America in 1946-47 when he indulged in anti-régime propaganda.

13. *Mgr. Basilios Khoury*

Greek Catholic, Archbishop of Saida, born 1900. Was always on best of terms with the French. Superior of "St. Sauveur" Convent at Joun in 1937. Carried on collaboration with the French after November 1943 and lately caught red-handed sheltering a criminal but matter was hushed up. Appointed Archbishop of Saida in March 1947. Educated, intelligent.

14. *Mgr. Aghabius Naoum*

Greek Catholic Archbishop of Sour, born 1882. No particular tendencies.

15. *Mgr. Maximos Sayegh*

Greek Catholic Archbishop of Beirut, born 1878, from Aleppo. Was appointed Archbishop of Tyre in 1919 and of Beirut in 1938. Well liked by his community, to whom he devotes himself. On the whole pro-French, but advocates an Anglo-French-American guarantee of an independent Lebanon. Is consistently anti-Communist and has on occasion delivered anti-Communist sermons.

16. *Mgr. Aftimus Youakim*

Greek Catholic Archbishop of the Kekaa, residing at Zahlé, born about 1884. Well educated, on good terms with the French, not popular with his congregation.

Greek Orthodox

17. *Mgr. Elia Karam*

Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Mount Lebanon, residing at Hadad, near Beirut; born in 1896 from Bhandun. Speaks no foreign language other than a little Russian, intelligent but venal and hypocritical. Is said to have bribed his colleagues to elect him as archbishop. Studied in Russia before 1914-18 war. On good terms with all foreign authorities, particularly French and more recently with Soviet Legation.

18. *Mgr. Theodosius Abu-Rjaili*

Greek Orthodox Archbishop of South Lebanon, residing at Jdaidit-Marjeyun; born about 1887 from Marjeyun, well educated and intelligent but a bit of a twister; if anything, is pro-British; speaks English. Vaguely anti-Communist.

19. *Mgr. Niphon Saba*

Greek Orthodox Archbishop of the Bekka, residing at Zahlé; born about 1884 from Hasbaya, cultivated, has nationalist sentiments, and has shown recently anti-Communist tendencies. Left on a tour of South America in March 1947. On the whole an opportunist.

20. *Mgr. Elie Saleeby*

Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Beirut, born 1876 from Souk-el-Gharb. Appointed archbishop in 1935 on the death of his predecessor to whom he had been assistant. Opportunist and is considered dishonest in his handling of the large Wakf of his community, by a large section of which he is distrusted and criticised. Professes staunch friendship for Great Britain. Is on good terms with the Soviet Legation.

Syrian Catholic

21. *Mgr. Ephram Hikary*

Syrian Catholic Archbishop attached to Cardinal Tapouni, born about 1884 in Mosul. Reputed venal.

22. *Mgr. Ignatios Nouri*

Syrian Catholic Archbishop of Bagdad, attached to Cardinal Tapouni, born in 1859.

23. *Cardinal Ignace Gabriel 1st Tappouni*

Syrian Catholic Cardinal and Patriarch, born 1879; from Mosul. Appointed Bishop of Srouj and Patriarchal Vicar-General at Mardine in 1913; Archbishop of Aleppo in 1921; elected Patriarch in 1929. Made Cardinal in 1933 at the instance of the French High Commissioner, who desired a counterpoise to the dictatorial pretensions of the Maronite Patriarch. Very pro-French and devoted to the Jesuits; detested by all Moslems, especially those of Syria, for his protection of the Christians in the Jezireh. Considered fanatical and venal. An open critic of the present régime. Received Grand Cordon of the Legion d'Honneur in 1947.

Syrian Orthodox

24. *Mgr. Ohanes Kandour*

Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Beirut and the Lebanon, born about 1884 from Mardin. No political tendencies.

25. *Mgr. Karekin Hovsepian*

Armenian Catholicos, born about 1867; of Caucasian origin. Formerly Bishop of Echmiadzin, Armenia, was later appointed Catholicos of Cilicia. Came to Lebanon with Armenian emigrants in 1923. Does little to combat the spread of communism among his community. Favours return of Armenians to Soviet Armenia. On good terms with the Russian Legation. Educated in Germany and Russia.

Armenian Orthodox

26. *Mgr. Ardavast Surmeyan*

Born in Turkey 1887. Was 16 years in Aleppo as Archimandrite and later in Antelias, Mount Lebanon, as Archbishop. Went to Paris in July 1946, where he is now Vicar-General of the Catholicos. Intelligent, though an opportunist and pretentious. Is in favour of good relations with Russia.

Armenian Catholic

27. *Grégoire Pierre XV Aghajanian*

Armenian Catholic Patriarch of Cilicia and acknowledged as Patriarch by Armenian Catholics throughout the world. Originally from Tiflis, but now resident in Beirut, born 1895. Studied and taught at Rome. Became a priest in 1917, bishop in 1935 and patriarch in 1937. Elevated to rank of Cardinal 1945. Pro-French but is on good terms

with Lebanese authorities. Anti-Communist and opposed to emigration of Armenians to Soviet Armenia. Well disposed towards Great Britain.

Highly cultivated and speaks several languages. A clever diplomat. An outstanding personality.

28. *Louis Batanian*

Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Vicar-General of Beirut, born 1899. Became a priest in 1921 and bishop in 1933. Worked successively in Egypt, Iraq and the Lebanon. Highly cultivated, speaks several languages. Shares the views of Cardinal Aghajanian.

Jew

29. *Shabelai Bhabut*

Grand Rabbi of Lebanese Republic, born in Beirut 1876. Has very little education, and possesses little prestige and influence amongst his community.

Sunni

30. *Sheikh Muhammed Taufiq Khalid*

Sunni Mufti of the Lebanese Republic, born about 1878; from Beirut. Became anti-British over the Zionist question in Palestine and early in the war was strongly pro-Axis; had numerous contacts with the German and Italian Armistice Commissions. Formerly considered not sufficiently energetic in defence of Moslem interests and consequently not highly thought of by his community, but enhanced his prestige in the summer of 1943 by his advocacy of the Moslem case on an electoral issue; and is now on reasonably good terms with the British.

Shia

31. *Seyyid Abdul Hussein Sharafeddin*

Chief of the Shia Ulema (Mujahiddin), born about 1867; resides near Tyre, of which his son is Mufti. Was a student at Najaf. Strongly anti-Christian and Xenophobe; during the 1936-38 Palestine troubles preached the Jihad against the British, but refused to support the Vichy authorities against the British in 1941 because no Moslem interest was involved. Tried to play off the British authorities against the French after the Allied occupation. Enjoys considerable prestige in Moslem religious circles.

Druzes

32. *Sheikh Mohamad Abdul Samad*

A Druze, born in the Shuf, Mount Lebanon, in 1869. Elected Grand Sheikh el Akl in September 1946 as a result of the support of the Emir Adel Arslan, to whose faction he belongs. Well disposed towards the British.

33. *Ali Mizhir*

Born Hamana 1896. Lawyer. Unsuccessful candidate in 1943 elections, in which he stood on Emile Eddé's list. Appointed by Lebanese Government in 1945 as Kadi of the Druzes. An opportunist and an intriguer.

34. *Sheikh Husain Talih*

Druze Sheikh-ul-Akl, born 1855; from Jdeideh-ech-Chouf (Mount Lebanon). Belongs to the Jumblat faction. Intelligent, honest and has pro-British tendencies. Takes no part in politics.

Obituary since Last Report

Emir Rafik Arslan.

Emir Khalil Bellama.

Me. Moussa Nammour.

Dr. Ayoub Tabet.

SYRIA AND LEBANON: WEEKLY POLITICAL SUMMARY No. 243

Week ending 17th December, 1946

(Received 6th January, 1947)

[EXTRACT]

General

His Majesty's Legations in Damascus and Beirut, acting on instructions from the Foreign Office, issued a communiqué to the press on 16th December that they were authorised to state that reports based on a message from a United Press correspondent that British diplomatic quarters favoured the Greater Syria movement were quite unfounded, and that the official British view was that this was a matter which exclusively concerned the Governments of Arab countries.

Economic

In North Syria very little rain has fallen until recently, and there is considerable doubt as to whether the autumn sowings of grain will give a yield.

The Czechoslovak Commercial Commission (see Weekly Political Summary No. 242, Economic), is reported in the press to have stated that Czechoslovakia can supply such articles as industrial and agricultural machinery, chemical and pharmaceutical goods, tin plate, rubber products, typewriters, printing machinery, textiles, glassware, pottery, furniture, hardware and weaving machinery, but that since there are likely to be currency difficulties the Syrian Government will study the possibility of trading on the basis of barter or extended credit.

Syria

The Syrian Cabinet has remained in a state of suspended animation during the week, with the Prime Minister, Saadullah Jabri, in Cairo. Consultations are known to be going on amongst leading politicians with a view to the formation of a new Cabinet.

His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires took tea with the Syrian President on 14th December, when Shukri Bey Quwatli took the opportunity of cross-questioning him on the policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to Greater Syria. The President did not appear satisfied with the statement that His Majesty's Government were neither for nor against any such project; he somewhat plaintively pointed out

that Syria, under a Republican régime, had made every endeavour to strengthen her relations with Great Britain, and had asked for a military mission, educational assistance and for advisers and had done everything to import manufactured goods (but with little success) from the United Kingdom; why, therefore, was His Majesty's Government "neither for nor against" the Syrian Republican régime? The *démenti* mentioned in section 1 appears to have reassured him.

During the sitting of the Chamber on 12th December a statement was read from the Minister of Public Works that he had requested the Council of Ministers to allot the sum of £Syr.10 million as a first instalment towards implementing the scheme which was being studied by Sir Alexander Gibband, Partners, for supplying Aleppo with water from the Euphrates.

The Press Attaché was approached during the week by the Syrian Director of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones with a view to assisting in the provision of radio programmes for the low-powered broadcasting station which will be opened in Damascus early next year. The Director offered to give an hour's broadcasting time each day to the Press Attaché, and suggested that during this period a news bulletin in English should be broadcast.

His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo reports that the Communists continue to hold meetings at which anti-Government and anti-British speeches are made, though it appears that they are still being particularly careful to give the Central Government no opportunity of taking counter-measures against them; for this reason, in connexion with the recent strike of mill workers in Aleppo, the Communists did their best to ensure that there were no incidents.

Lebanon

On 14th December the formation of the new Lebanese Government was announced as follows:—

Riad es Solh (Sunni), Prime Minister.
Sabri Hamadi (Shia), Vice-Premier and Minister of Interior.

Abdullah Yafi (Sunni), Minister of Justice.

Henri Pharaon (Greek Catholic), Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Emigrants.

Gabriel Murr (Greek Orthodox), Minister of Public Works.

Camille Chamoun (Maronite), Minister of Finance.

Emir Mejjid Arslan (Druze), Minister of National Defence and Posts and Telegraphs.

Kamal Jumblat (Druze), Minister of National Economy, Social Affairs and Agriculture.

Dr. Elias Khoury (Maronite), Minister of Education and Public Assistance.

Pending the return of Camille Chamoun from London, Abdullah Yafi will act as Minister of Finance.

The Government represents the closest possible approach to a coalition, and its formation was only made possible by considerable concessions on the part of Riad es Solh and Henri Pharaon and their respective followers. The press reaction

has not been universally enthusiastic; one or two newspapers, however, described the Government as the strongest since the country achieved its independence, and it is noteworthy that it has been welcomed by the French language paper *L'Orient*, the fears of which on the score of Riad es Solh's nationalism appear to have been allayed. Provided that the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs are able to co-operate satisfactorily, there is no doubt that the position of the new Government will be a strong one, though it is unlikely to be conspicuous for administrative competence or honesty.

There are two new Ministries: the Ministry of Emigrants which has been warmly welcomed by the pro-French press but is viewed with some suspicion in nationalist circles, and the Ministry of Social Affairs, which, *inter alia*, will deal with labour problems and is an addition long overdue. The appointment of Henri Pharaon as Minister for Foreign Affairs is welcomed by the French, who hope that as a result outstanding questions will be more readily resolved.

SYRIA AND LEBANON: WEEKLY POLITICAL SUMMARY No. 244

Week ending 24th December, 1946

(Received 16th January, 1947)

[EXTRACT]

General

A further article on Greater Syria by Walter Kolarz, the United Press correspondent in London (see Weekly Political Summary No. 243, Section 1, paragraph 1) has been reproduced in the local press and has served to correct to some extent his previous misleading articles on this subject. Kolarz now writes: "The British attitude towards this project can best be described as 'neutral.' One should therefore expect from official British quarters neither open condemnation of this project nor expressions of approval. It is felt here that the new trends in British Imperial and foreign policy prevent Britain from encouraging a project like

that of Greater Syria, which is an exclusive Arab concern."

Economic

M. Van Zeeland, the former Belgian Prime Minister, has agreed to advise the Lebanese Government on the reorganisation of their finances. Riad Solh has, however, made it clear that he is anxious to make full use of the services of British experts as well, he said that a contract for a survey of certain economic projects with the British firm of consulting engineers, Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners, would be signed within a few days, and welcomed the idea of the appointment of a British statistician in connexion with the common interests, a matter concerning which the Syrian Government have already been in

touch with His Majesty's Legation at Damascus.

Syria

The resignation of Saadullah Jabri's Government was announced on 21st December by Khaled el Azm, the Acting Prime Minister. After considerable political activity, it has been announced in the press that Jamil Mardam has been asked to form a new Government. It is probable that the Government will be a coalition representing the National *Bloc*, and the Opposition with one or two "neutral" members. It is learned that Saadullah Jabri, without whose parliamentary support no new Government could be expected to last, has assured Jamil Mardam that he will provide the necessary parliamentary backing.

It is reported in the press that the French have asked for the sum of £5.8 million for French property taken over by the Syrian authorities. Most Syrian newspapers consider that the Syrian Government should first secure compensation for the damage inflicted on Syrian towns by the French in 1945 before considering French claims on Syria.

Lebanon

The new Lebanese Government received a unanimous vote of confidence at the sitting of the Chamber on 21st December, although there are already indications that, as anticipated, co-operation between Riad Solh and Henri Pharaon is not proving easy. There is little doubt that the unanimous vote of confidence is a tribute to the prestige of the members of the Administration rather than an expression of satisfaction with the statement of the Government's policy which, as the Prime Minister admitted, was in most general terms, particularly as regards internal and economic affairs. The following points regarding the Government's foreign policy from the Prime Minister's speech are of interest:—

- (a) Complete independence of the Lebanon within its present borders and close collaboration with Arab States within the framework of the Charter of the League. Collaboration with the Arab League must be on condition that it does not affect

in any way the independence of the Lebanon.

- (b) Collaboration with Syria should be of such a nature as to safeguard the common interests of the two countries.
- (c) Egypt will receive from the Lebanon nothing short of full support in its struggle for complete independence.
- (d) The Lebanese will not relax their efforts as long as Palestine remains threatened and until its sovereignty and Arabism are realised.

In connexion with the newly-formed Ministry of Emigrants, the Prime Minister gave an undertaking that the question would not be treated in a manner to increase the voting power of any religious community.

The Government have decided that Camille Chamoun, the Lebanese Minister in London and newly-appointed Minister of Finance, will stay in the United Kingdom until after the Palestine Conference in January. Charles Hellou, the editor of *Le Jour*, has been appointed to be the first Lebanese Minister to the Vatican. He is a close friend of the President and his family.

The Secretary-General of the Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs informed His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires that the French and United States Governments had agreed to the abolition of the Mixed Courts as from the end of the year. The necessary draft law will be submitted to the Lebanese Chamber on 30th December.

Two articles have appeared in the Communist newspaper *Saut-esh-Shaab*, contending that the majority of workmen to whom leaving indemnities are being paid by the British military authorities have been deprived of their rights, and that those who are receiving them have to thank Mustafa Ariss and the International Federation of Trades Unions. Measures to correct this misleading impression are being taken by His Majesty's Legation.

Nicolas Shawi, the editor of *Saut-esh-Shaab*, has been elected President of the Lebanese Communist Party in place of Farajallah Hellou, who it is reported intends in the near future to visit Paris and London.

SYRIA AND LEBANON: WEEKLY POLITICAL SUMMARY No. 245

Week ending 31st December, 1946

(Received 23rd January, 1947)

[Extract]

General
Nil.

Economic

There has been much speculation regarding the new Lebanese Government's economic policy and it is believed that an attempt will be made to lower duties on essential commodities and increase them on luxury goods. On 31st December the Lebanese Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and acting Minister of Finance, and the Minister for National Economy visited Damascus to establish contact with the new Syrian Government and to hold preliminary discussion regarding joint economic measures. In this connexion the campaign of *L'Orient* and other papers of the same tendency for the dissolution of the Syrian-Lebanese economic union has been intensified. *L'Orient* contends that in order to strengthen the political solidarity existing between Damascus and Beirut the economic union must be broken, and that the ground must be prepared before the end of 1947, when the Common Interest Convention expires.

A contract between the Lebanese Government and the British firm of consulting engineers, Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners, was signed on 27th December (see Weekly Political Summary No. 244, Economic). This development has been strongly criticised by the Communist paper *Saut-esh-Shaab* and also by the Phalangist organ *Amal*.

At the sitting of the Syrian Chamber of Deputies on 31st December the Syrian Prime Minister announced that the restrictions on transport of cereals throughout Syria would be lifted from 1st January, 1947.

Syria

On the 23rd December Jamil Bey Mardam announced the composition of his Government as follows:—

Jamil Mardam: Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior and Public Health.

Said Ghazzi: Minister of Finance.

Maim Antaki: Minister for Foreign Affairs.

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Ahmed Sharabati: Minister of National Defence.

Emir Adel Arslan: Minister of Education.

Dr. Hikmat el Hakim: Minister of National Economy.

Dr. Adnan Atassi: Minister of Justice and Public Works.

The Cabinet, with the exception of the Prime Minister, contains no outstanding personalities but the Minister of Justice and Public Works is a member of Rushdi Kekhia's Parliamentary Opposition Party. It may therefore be termed a Coalition Government though in view of the absence of political personalities it will have to rely for its parliamentary majority on the support of Saadullah Bey Jabri and his followers. Jamil Bey, in a speech in Parliament on 30th December, outlined the policy of his Government in general terms. The most important points were that the Government believed that the interests of Syria required the maintenance of the republican régime; that the Government would aim at a balance of imports and exports through a policy of increasing agricultural and industrial production and that the Government was resolved to respect the freedom of the press. After a debate on the Prime Minister's statement during which the general attitude was one of "wait and see," Jamil Bey received a vote of confidence by fifty-eight votes to thirty-three; those voting against included three of the recent Cabinet, Khaled el Azm, Sabri el Assali and Michel Lian and a certain number of Aleppo Deputies, a few Kurds, some of the Atrash family and a few Deputies from the Alaouite district.

At the final sitting of the 7th Ordinary Session of the Chamber a presidential decree was read convening Parliament to an extraordinary session commencing on 11th January during which the 1947 budget will be debated. In view of the terms of the decree, no other matter can be considered before the next ordinary sitting on 16th March.

Pamphlets have been distributed in Damascus signed by a Dr. Mohammad Sobhi Ghanimeh, calling himself president of the

Transjordan Arab Party, attacking the Anglo-Transjordan Treaty, the new Transjordan constitution and King Abdullah's forthcoming visit to Angora.

According to the press the Aleppo Federation of Trade Unions met recently and took the following decisions:—

- (1) To enforce the application of the Labour Code and call a strike if employers do not co-operate.
- (2) To reduce as much as possible the widespread unemployment.
- (3) To use all means to combat the high cost of living.
- (4) To improve the quality of flour.
- (5) To insist that Government contractors should employ local labour.
- (6) To protect local industries and obtain a good supply of raw materials.
- (7) To stop the sale of foreign imitations of Syrian products.
- (8) To make social welfare services available to all.

Lebanon

The Lebanese President attended the sitting of the Chamber on 30th December when the Prime Minister stated that the evacuation of foreign troops had been completed, that the Mixed Courts would be abolished and that the Government has decided to reduce the price of flour and wheat by approximately 30 per cent. In his statement the Prime Minister paid a tribute to the work of the President of the Republic in achieving the country's independence and also to the foreign Powers concerned for their scrupulous observance of the terms of the agreement. All members

of the French Liquidation Staff left the Lebanon on 31st December, 1946.

The draft law for the abolition of the Mixed Courts was presented by the Minister of Justice, who paid a warm tribute to the French judges for their work in the Lebanese Courts. The Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed the thanks of his Government to the U.S.S.R. which had abandoned privileges enjoyed under the Ottoman Empire. He also thanked the American Government, His Majesty's Government and the French Government who had welcomed the abolition of the Mixed Courts. The draft law was passed unanimously.

Count Ostrorog has been awarded the decoration of Grand Officer of the Order of the Cedar and is leaving shortly to take up his appointment as French Minister in Dublin. The new Belgian Minister, M. d'Aspremont Lynden, presented his letters of credence to the Lebanese President on 30th December. Joseph Harfouche, the newly-appointed Lebanese Chargé d'Affaires in Brussels, is being recalled to be Director of Emigrants; this department will, for the time being, continue to form part of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Note.—In view of the separation of His Majesty's Legations at Beirut and Damascus, the Beirut Combined Weekly Political Summary will close with this number.

Separate summaries will in future be prepared at Beirut and Damascus and will for the present be circulated to all who have hitherto received the combined Summary.

December, 1946. Among those present were the Syrian Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet, a representative of the Syrian President, the Iraqi Minister for Social Affairs, the Secretary-General of the Iraqi Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

The question of communications between His Majesty's Government and the Secretary-General of the Arab League continues

to be the subject of hostile comment in certain sections of the Lebanese press. The Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs stated to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires that he was considering addressing a note to the Arab League on the subject, but eventually he agreed not to do so; later, in conversation with the Oriental Secretary, he became greatly excited at what he maintained was the policy of His Majesty's Government, namely, that the Arab League should speak for all Arab countries—the Lebanese would never agree to this, he said. A possible approach to the Lebanese Government is under consideration with a view to their either publishing the text of His Majesty's Legation's note on the subject, or issuing a communiqué to correct the misleading impression given by the communiqué issued by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs (see Combined Weekly Political Summary No. 242, General). This controversy is indicative of a deep-rooted divergence of opinion in the Lebanon, both among the public and in the Cabinet itself. On the one hand, there are those, for the most part Christians, including many former pro-French elements, who, for the want of a better term, might be called the "Lebanese Nationalists," and who are highly suspicious of the Arab League and of its pan-Arab or, at worst, Islamic tendencies, and are determined to avoid commitments transcending those of the Cairo Protocol. On the other hand, the "Arab Nationalists" welcome the maximum co-operation with the League compatible with the exigencies of local Lebanese politics. The adherents of this group are for the most part Moslems, but Christians are also found amongst their numbers, including such personalities as the President and the present Speaker,

Habib Abi Chahla. It is significant that at a recent reception organised by the Najjadé, Riad es Solh stated that "his friend" Henri Pharaon was in agreement with him on the "Arab character" of the Lebanon. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, who followed the Prime Minister at the microphone, said that he fully concurred, but added that he must record his insistence on the full independence of the Lebanon, her membership of United Nations Organisation, and participation in the Arab League on the basis of complete national sovereignty. In the course of conversation about Greater Syria with a member of the legation staff, the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs remarked that if King Abdullah persisted in his scheme for a Greater Syria the Arab League might find itself obliged to expel Transjordan; this would be deplorable and could not fail to have repercussions on the relations of His Majesty's Government with other Arab States.

Economic

Agricultural workers throughout the Lebanon have been on nominal strike for two days as a protest against municipal taxes on agricultural products (*octroi*). The Régie des Tabacs employees are also threatening to strike again as a result of the refusal of the Government to agree to pay the annual bonus of one month's pay. Following a reduction in the price of wheat and flour, the Minister of National Economy is negotiating with the Petroleum Company for a lowering of the prices of petroleum products. Other measures designed to lower the cost of living are being studied and will be discussed at a Syrian-Lebanese conference at Chtaura on 9th January.

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No. 13

LEBANON: WEEKLY SUMMARY No. 1

Week ending 7th January, 1947

(Received 28th January, 1947)

[Extract]

Political

The official celebrations of the evacuation of foreign troops from the Lebanon took place from 1st-3rd January. The President unveiled an inscription at the Dog River—the site of many historical monuments dating from the earliest times—commemorating the completion of the withdrawal of foreign forces on 31st

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No. 14

LEBANON: WEEKLY SUMMARY No. 2

Week ending 14th January, 1947

(Received 6th February, 1947)

[Extract]

Political

Mr. Young, Chargé d'Affaires of His Majesty's Legation, left Beirut on 13th January for the United Kingdom. Receptions in his honour had been given by the President of the Chamber and the Minister

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for Foreign Affairs. He was also entertained by the President of the Republic. Mr. Talbot has assumed charge of His Majesty's Legation.

At a sitting of the Lebanese Chamber on 10th January the Prime Minister, replying to several speeches advocating the abolition

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of municipal taxes (octroi), stated that the Government were giving the matter close attention. After the results of the Chtaura Conference between members of the Syrian and Lebanese Governments on 9th January had been announced (see section 2 below), a draft law for the modification of the Constitution was read and passed unanimously. The purpose of this law is to remove certain anomalies of form; an article giving the Government the right to issue decrees in the period between the dissolution of the Chamber and the holding of elections was withdrawn by the Government. The Chamber sat again on 14th January. In a speech in which he pointed out that the Lebanon could not afford to spend 50 per cent. of its budget on the civil service, Hamid Frangieh advocated a gradual reduction of the civil service budget over a period of fifteen years. He also stressed the need for the reorganisation of the civil service as a whole and for the employment of foreign experts. Joseph Salem urged the Government to reduce the tariffs which he said were higher than in neighbouring countries, and at the same time to give urgent consideration to the problem of hard currencies. The Prime Minister, replying, assured the House that these problems were being studied by the Government. As regards hard currencies, he said that some £70 million Lebanese were virtually blocked abroad and could only be released by the import of goods. The Opposition Deputy, Georges Akl, complained that no steps had been taken for the holding of municipal elections.

A large-scale reorganisation of the Judiciary has taken place following the abolition of the Mixed Courts. Under the new arrangements, cases pending before the Mixed Court of First Instance will be heard before the first of three Courts of First Instance at Beirut, and cases pending before the Mixed Court of Appeal will be heard by the third of three Courts of Appeal. Judges with experience of the Mixed Courts have been appointed to these courts.

The Prime Minister, in conversation with a member of His Majesty's Legation, stated that he was determined to strike a blow at the Communists, and that he was also considering measures for dealing with the para-military organisations such as the Phalangists and the Najjadé.

The charges against the local Communists (see Combined Political Summary No. 242) have been withdrawn by the Government. The Prime Minister

explained to a member of the legation that the cases had been badly prepared by the previous Government, and if the trial had continued the men would probably have been acquitted. It had therefore been decided to withdraw the charges.

Representations have been made by His Majesty's Legation to the Director-General of the Ministry of the Interior regarding the Communist paper *Saut-esh-Shaab*, which continues to publish articles derogatory to His Majesty's Government (and incidentally also to the local Governments). As a result, the Lebanese Government have decided to take the editor to task. If this warning goes unheeded, the suspension of the paper will be considered.

A new Armenian Catholic newspaper, *Massis*, has appeared in Beirut. In its first issue it takes a strongly anti-Communist line.

The visit of King Abdullah to Angora and the conclusion of the Turco-Transjordan Pact has been widely commented on. Considerable suspicion of the visit has been expressed in the press as a whole, and "Lebanese Nationalists" have been in full cry against any oriental or Moslem bloc. Arab Nationalist papers appear to be doubtful of the wisdom of accepting "British advice" to the Arab countries to establish closer relations with Turkey. Nevertheless, a signed article by the banker Michel Chiha (a relative of the President and of the Minister for Foreign Affairs) in his paper *Le Jour*, in which, while professing friendship for Britain, he violently attacked King Abdullah, has resulted in energetic replies by a number of Arab Nationalist papers.

Considerable uneasiness regarding the outcome of the Palestine Conference is discernible and there is a tendency to interpret the invitation of the Higher Arab Committee to attend the conference as a victory for His Majesty's Government rather than for the Arabs.

The Lebanese Government have declined on invitation to send observers to the Asiatic Congress to be held in India on the grounds that the congress is unofficial and that invitations have been addressed to non-Government bodies.

Economic

Following the Chtaura Conference on 9th January, which was attended by the Lebanese and Syrian Prime Ministers, Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Ministers for Finance and Ministers for National Economy, a communiqué was issued by the

Lebanese Government to the effect that complete agreement had been reached, that a reduction in the price of petrol, paraffin and heavy oil had been decided on, and that taxes on matches and lighters had been abolished. The communiqué concluded that measures for the reduction in the prices of consumer goods had also been discussed and that further meetings would take place. At the meeting of the Lebanese Chamber on 10th January the Prime Minister announced that the price of petrol had been reduced from 755 piastres to 600 piastres a tin, and that of paraffin from 500 piastres to 325 piastres. A draft law by which considerable reductions in rents would be effected is under consideration.

An agreement has been signed between the Lebanese and Saudi-Arabian Governments for the operation of air services between the two countries by Lebanese and Saudi-Arabian companies. Sheikh Yusef

Yasin, the Acting Saudi-Arabian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who signed the agreement on behalf of his Government, has been awarded the decoration of Grand Officer of the Order of the Cedar.

According to the press, it was decided at the Chtaura Conference to maintain the Conseil Supérieur des Intérêts Communs in its present form and not to appoint a Syrian co-director. The report adds that the two Governments have instructed the council to study, in collaboration with officials of the Syrian and Lebanese Ministries of Finance and National Economy the reorganisation of the Syrian-Lebanese Customs and Economic Union, and in this connexion to make use of the services of M. Van Zeeland, the Belgian expert.

According to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Van Zeeland is expected to arrive on 15th February.

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No. 15

LEBANON: WEEKLY SUMMARY No. 3

Week ending 22nd January, 1947

(Received 6th February, 1947)

[Extract]

Political

The 1947 budget, which had been prepared by the last Administration and adopted without major change by the present Government, was presented, together with a report of the Financial Committee, to the Chamber on 15th January. In the debate which followed, Saib Salam stressed the need for a Statistical Department and for a Government-owned bank of issue. Replying on behalf of the Government on 16th January, the Acting Minister of Finance stated that the financial situation of the country was satisfactory; that it was hoped that the commercial and economic position would improve shortly; that the Government was studying the civil service establishment with a view to a reduction in the number of Government employees; that the allocation in the present budget for an irrigation scheme amounted to £Leb.6 million, as opposed to £Leb.2 million in the previous budget; and, finally, that the activities of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban were closely controlled. In reply to a point made by the Opposition

Deputy, Georges Akl, regarding the Lebanon's dependence on a foreign Power for its hard currency, he explained that the country's foreign exchange continued to be made available under the terms of the Anglo-French Agreement of January 1944.

A clash between the supporters of Abdul Hamid Keramé and the Mokaddem faction in Tripoli on 18th January resulted in a number of casualties. The Government are considerably concerned at the position in north Lebanon, and, in addition to strengthening the security forces there, are considering the transfer of both the Director-General of the municipality (a brother of Abdul Hamid Keramé) and the anti-Keramé Mohafez.

The Prime Minister has told a member of the legation that he is not in favour of issuing an additional communiqué, or publishing the text of His Majesty's Legation's note, regarding communications between His Majesty's Government and the Arab League (see Weekly Summary No. 1, Political) on the grounds that the campaign would gradually die down, and in any case many of those responsible were

acting in bad faith. Less, in fact, has appeared in the local Press in the course of the week, and conversations with the Minister for Foreign Affairs have served to reassure him to some extent. Pharaon's suspicion of Azzam Pasha, however, has not diminished, and he has instructed the Lebanese Minister in Cairo to enquire on what authority the Arab League communiqué on the Sudan question was issued, *i.e.*, whether it was a result of the decision of the Arab League Council. The Minister for Foreign Affairs added that if he had been present at the meeting he would certainly not have agreed to any such decision and argued that in this way a Lebanon not completely subservient to the Arab League would be in the interests of His Majesty's Government.

Further pressure is being exerted on the Minister for Foreign Affairs by the Soviet Legation for the return of the former Czarist properties. He is determined not to comply with the Soviet request for expropriation on the grounds that they have no legal claim. He finds himself, however, in an embarrassing position in view of commitments made by his two predecessors, and therefore proposes to recommend to the Government that monetary compensation amounting to £Leb.200,000 should be offered to the Soviet authorities. Before making this recommendation he asked for the views of His Majesty's Legation.

Agreement has been reached between the Lebanese Government and the Italian representative regarding Italian properties. Diplomatic relations between Italy and the Lebanon will shortly be established.

The French Legation continue to press for an early settlement of the French properties question, and are threatening to go back on an understanding regarding

the export of Lebanese citrus fruit to France if they do not receive satisfaction.

Jamal Husseini visited Beirut on the 17th January before his departure for London and granted an interview to a local correspondent, which has already been reported.

Mustafa Ariss, president of the Lebanese Union of Syndicates, has left for a trade union conference in Tunis. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has instructed the Lebanese Minister in Paris to inform the French authorities that Mustafa Ariss does not represent Lebanese trade unionists. Henri Pharaon recently accepted the honorary presidency of the newly-formed Anti-Communist League of Trade Unions and is also helping them financially.

Economic

The Syrian and Lebanese Prime Ministers, Ministers of Finance and Ministers of National Economy met at Ohtaura on 21st January. This was followed by a Common Interests decree reducing customs duties on silk, cotton and woollen material by 10 per cent., on cotton thread by 5 per cent., and on silk thread and wool by 14 per cent.

Beirut Port workers were on strike on the 16th January. The Government refused to accede to their demand for a bonus of a month's salary and threatened their dismissal if they did not return to work.

Following the visit of a representative of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the Lebanese Government have agreed to offer facilities for a preliminary survey in connexion with the possible routing of a pipeline through Lebanese territory.

According to the press a Lebanese Commercial Secretary will shortly be appointed in Bagdad.

Minister and the Minister for National Economy. Further meetings between the Syrian and Lebanese authorities have been postponed.

2. The debate on the 1947 budget was continued at the sittings of the Chamber on 22nd and 23rd January. The former sitting was enlivened by a passionate speech by Emile Lahoud, former Minister of Finance, in which he indignantly refuted charges made by a certain Arabic newspaper regarding an alleged scandal in the Ministry of Finance (see last week's summary). His request that the charges should be investigated by a special committee of enquiry provided by the Constitution for such cases was rejected by the Speaker of the House and by the Prime Minister, who emphasised that the former Minister of Finance had already been adequately cleared by the Government.

3. At the sitting on 23rd January a motion expressing the solidarity of the Lebanese Chamber with Egypt was proposed by Philippe Takla, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, and unanimously carried. The President of the Chamber informed His Majesty's Legation that the Egyptian Chargé d'Affaires had requested the Lebanese Government to follow the example of the Syrian Government in this respect. He said that this request had caused him embarrassment which was shared by the President and the Prime Minister and undertook to do his best to see that speeches were moderated. He explained that the motion had been moved by M. Takla (whose friendly feelings towards Britain were well known) in order that there should be no possible misunderstanding regarding the Government's sentiments.

4. News of the breakdown of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations has come as a shock to the Lebanese Government and President. The Nationalist press has without exception been almost vehement in its expression of its support for Egypt. In a signed article which appeared in his paper *Le Jour*, however, the influential Michel Chiha warned Middle East statesmen that the British Empire was subjected to certain inescapable necessities and that it was in no one's interest that the moral force which it represented should be weakened to a point where its existence was threatened.

5. On 22nd January letters were exchanged by His Majesty's Legation and the Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs regarding the abolition of the Mixed Courts.

6. There has been some speculation regarding the meeting of the Transjordan Minister and M. Eddé at the table of the

Maronite Patriarch at Bkerké, and this has been intensified by the news that the Transjordan Minister would offer a reception on 29th January on the occasion of His Beatitude's visit to Beirut. It is significant that the recent improvement in Lebanese-Syrian relations has been accompanied by a marked deterioration in the relations between Beirut and Amman which during the previous administration had been markedly friendly. There is little doubt that the Transjordan Minister is endeavouring to strengthen his position by cultivating the Opposition. It is also learned from a reliable source that the Lebanese Government encouraged Mohammed el Ajlouni to give this reception in honour of the patriarch in order to compromise M. Eddé and that he neatly fell into the trap.

7. The Palestine Conference has figured prominently in the press, which has expressed its opposition to any solution on a partition basis. Preliminary reports from the Lebanese representatives in London are known to be pessimistic.

8. Mr. Wadsworth, former United States Minister in the Levant States, has returned to take his leave of the Lebanese President and Government before proceeding to Iraq to take up his appointment as American Ambassador in Bagdad. Large-scale receptions have been organised by the Government in his honour. He has also been engaged in attempting to put the final touches to the Lebanese-American Treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation which he hopes to sign before leaving the country. It is known, however, that there are still certain difficulties to overcome in view of the American insistence on non-discrimination and the desire of the Lebanese to provide for preferential treatment of member States of the Arab League.

Economic

9. Both the President and the Prime Minister have been advised to be wary about granting any concessions in the economic field pending the conclusion of the Gibb survey. The Prime Minister admitted that the advice was timely as the Government were under pressure from several quarters and urged the need for expedition on the part of Sir Alexander Gibb and partners.

10. At the press conference referred to above, the Prime Minister spoke at length on his Government's endeavours to lower the cost of living. He said that the Govern-

[Extract]

Political

Local political activity has been considerably restricted in the course of the week owing to the indisposition of the Prime

ment were considering means to facilitate the economic and industrial re-equipment of the country and that a draft law had been submitted to the Chamber providing

for the abolition for a period of five years of taxes on new buildings. Drastic cuts have been announced in tariff rates on agricultural and industrial machinery.

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No. 17

LEBANON: WEEKLY SUMMARY No. 5

Week ending 4th February, 1947

[Extract]

Political

The Greater Syria controversy has again flared up. On 1st February the Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the chargé d'affaires that the Christians were perturbed by continuous reports of British backing for the movement, and suggested that His Majesty's Government should either issue a further communiqué or authorise him to make a statement in the Lebanese Chamber. He then submitted the draft of the relevant part of his speech, which was referred to the Foreign Office for approval. Press reports that Transjordan forces were massing on the Syrian frontier led to a *démenti* by the Transjordan Legation. There is no doubt that a new turn has been given to the question as the result of a tendency on the part of certain Christian elements, perhaps under French influence, to modify their previous attitude of opposition to the scheme. It is significant that *L'Orient* changed overnight its attitude from outright opposition to conditional acquiescence.

2. During the Maronite Patriarch's visit to Beirut he was entertained by the President of the Republic, the French Minister and also the Transjordan Minister. His Beatitude called on M. Eddé (much to the annoyance of the President) and also visited the Phalangist centre.

3. On 30th January the President communicated to the Arab diplomatic representatives in Beirut for reference to their Governments a suggestion by the Syrian President (in which he concurred) that an appeal should be made to The King over the question of Palestine.

4. On 31st January Mr. Evans was received by the President and took the opportunity of speaking to him unofficially on the Egyptian question.

5. Attempts by the French Minister to induce the Lebanese to agree to the appointment of a French national as Papal

Nuncio are not meeting with success. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed Count du Chayla that such an appointment would not be in the interests either of the Vatican or the French themselves, as a Frenchman would in present circumstances be unable to avoid causing suspicion in Syria.

6. At the meeting of the Chamber on 29th January the purchase of the H.B.T. Railway was, despite the opposition of MM. Naccache, Frangieh and Lahoud, approved by a large majority. At the sitting on the following day the budget of the Ministry of Health and Social Services was debated and approved. This included provision for the replacement of existing health clinics by a number of mobile ambulances.

7. The anniversary of the Prophet's birthday on 3rd January was celebrated with considerable ceremony. The President attended a reception at the mosque and exchanged speeches with the Mufti.

Economic

8. In pursuance of their policy of direct action to lower the prices of essential articles, the Government have by decree reduced the prices of petrol, kerosene, gas oil and fuel oil, as from 1st February. The prices of cement and matches were also reduced.

9. While passing through Beirut on his way to his new post as United States Ambassador at Bagdad, Mr. Wadsworth held a number of conversations with Ministers, as a result of which the proposed aviation agreement with the United States and a measure relating to the projected trans-Arabian pipe-line were submitted to a joint session of the Parliamentary Commissions of Justice and Foreign Affairs. The former was approved, but consideration of the latter was postponed for further examination.

10. The press has announced the beginning of negotiations between the Lebanon

and Turkey for the conclusion of a civil air agreement.

11. The Lebanese authorities are still unaware of the amount of foreign exchange which the French intend to place at their disposal during 1947. A substantial balance of sterling remains from the 1946 allocation and other sources. As regards dollars, it is understood that holdings of these are nearly exhausted, but the Minister of Finance in a statement to the press indicated that the Government hoped shortly to receive an initial allocation from the French for 1947. The free market rate of sterling has tended to decline, owing apparently to a Bank of England regulation suspending transfers from French account for the payment of textiles imported into the Lebanon from Italy.

12. Foreign trade statistics for the third quarter of 1946, which are now available, show that imports into Syria and the Lebanon in that quarter were valued at the high figure of over £Leb.70 million, as against only £Leb.33 million in the third quarter of 1945. Over the same period the value of exports also rose, in this case from £Leb.11½ million to £Leb.34½ million. During the first three quarters of 1946 the leading suppliers of imports were the United States with £Leb.35.9 million and the United Kingdom with £Leb.34.6 million.

13. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed the press that the French Government have agreed to purchase Lebanese citrus fruits to the value of 30 million francs.

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No. 18

LEBANON: WEEKLY SUMMARY No. 6

Week ending 11th February, 1947

(Received 6th March, 1947)

[Extract]

Political

The Syrian Prime Minister and Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Finance and Public Works visited Beirut on 4th and 5th February for further conferences with the Lebanese Government. Though no communiqué was issued it is known that political and economic problems were discussed.

2. On 5th February the Minister for Foreign Affairs informed His Majesty's Legation that the Syrian and Lebanese Governments had decided to offer their good offices with a view to the reopening of negotiations between His Majesty's Government and the Egyptian Government. It is probable that the ground had been considerably prepared by the unofficial approach to the Lebanese President referred to in paragraph 4 of last week's summary. On 5th February the Minister for Foreign Affairs handed His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires a memorandum offering good offices, and the latter replied on 11th February that His Majesty's Government welcomed the offer. In the meantime, on instructions from His Majesty's Government, His Majesty's Legation had addressed a note to the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs explaining the British attitude to the Egyptian and Sudanese question.

3. A summary of the proposals on the Palestine question laid before the Jewish and Arab delegates in London by His Majesty's Government have been communicated to the Lebanese Government, who have, however, so far made no comment. The British women and children evacuated from Palestine have received a good welcome in the Lebanon. Every facility has been offered by the Lebanese Government.

4. On instructions from the Foreign Office, His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs that it was not possible to agree to his proposed statement regarding Greater Syria (see paragraph 1 of last week's Political Summary). An alternative draft approved by the Foreign Office to the effect that the attitude of His Majesty's Government was one of complete neutrality was not accepted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. M. Pharaon later informed Mr. Talbot that in his speech in the Chamber on 12th he would not mention His Majesty's Government unless pressed, and in that event he would merely refer to His Majesty's Legation's communiqué of 16th December, 1946.

5. Statements in the press that the Syrian and Lebanese Presidents had addressed messages to King Farouk and

King Ibn Saud suggesting their intervention with King Abdullah and expressing their opposition to the oriental bloc under the leadership of Turkey led to a *démenti* by the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the suspension of the two offending newspapers *L'Orient* and *Saut-esh-Saab*. In the case of the former, suspension is *sine die*.

6. On 6th February a special messenger from King Farouk delivered a letter to the President of the Republic. The text was later published and concerned the gift of stamps commemorating the Inchass meeting. It is known, however, that the messenger also brought an assurance from King Farouk that he was opposed to the Greater Syria scheme.

7. At the meeting of the Chamber on 5th February, the budget of the Ministry of the Interior was approved. In the course of the debate, however, several Deputies advocated the amalgamation of the gendarmerie, police and public security services. A merchant shipping law was also passed. The sitting on the following day was marked by the return to the fold of the three South Lebanon Shiite Deputies who have been absenting themselves since the formation of the present Government. The existing rents law was extended for a further year when it became clear that Deputies were not in favour of the Government's new rents law, which aimed at a reduction in several categories of rents.

8. It has been announced that the Syrian President will pay a State visit to Beirut on 22nd and 23rd February.

9. The Lebanese Government have engaged the services of the Belgian expert, M. Xavier Lejeune de Schiervel, to advise on administrative reforms. M. de Schiervel has recently completed a similar mission with the Syrian Government.

10. Dr. George Hanna, Mrs. Emila Fares Ibrahim, and M. Antoine Tabet left Beirut on 12th February for the U.S.S.R., where they will be the guests of the Soviet Government. All three are members of the Society for the Promotion of Soviet-Lebanese Cultural Relations.

Economic

11. The Iraq Petroleum Company have informed the Lebanese Government of their readiness to make a compounded payment of £45,000 annually for the duration of the Iraq Concession (*i.e.*, for fifty-

three years) in respect of the services and assistance which the Lebanese Government may render under the terms of the convention of March 1931 between the Lebanese Government and the company and for which the company may be liable to pay. The proposal is that this payment shall be made in advance in January of each year, the first payment to be made for the year 1947.

12. The Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs has now approved the Bill relating to the trans-Arabian pipe-line project.

13. The Government continues to take measures for lowering prices and the cost of living, and railway transport charges are now under review. The Government's studies have led them to investigate closely the price formulæ of the oil-distributing companies. Both the Lebanese Minister of National Economy and the principal Syrian representative on the Council of Common Interests have requested the assistance of the commercial secretary in persuading the companies to provide more precise information on the subject of their costs and prices.

14. The president of the Lebanese Society of Political Economy has submitted to a conference of Syrian and Lebanese economists statistics indicating that the balance of payments of the Lebanon with Syria showed a deficit of £L.70 million in 1946.

15. The Council of Ministers is reported to have decided to accept a donation from Lebanese emigrants in Brazil of a 100 kilowatt broadcasting station.

16. Efforts are being made to secure permission for the French organisation "Seriatic" to operate in the Lebanon, but there appears to be considerable opposition to the proposal.

17. It is announced in the press that M. Lebon, Director-General of the Belgian Customs, and M. Roger, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Louvain, will shortly come to Beirut as customs adviser and economic adviser respectively. In conversation with a member of His Majesty's Legation, the Prime Minister stated that he had no knowledge of these appointments. The press also contains a report to the effect that the United States Legation has informed the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that a large number of American experts would be available to work for the Lebanese Government.

LEBANON: WEEKLY SUMMARY No. 7

Week ending 18th February, 1947

(Received 12th March, 1947)

[Extract]

Political

Mr. Houstoun-Boswall arrived in Beirut on 17th February to take up his appointment as His Majesty's Minister in the Lebanon.

2. The Government's foreign policy was approved by the Lebanese Chamber at their sitting on the 12th February. A major part of the Minister for Foreign Affairs' statement was devoted to the Greater Syria project and its relation to the Arab League. He also enumerated four developments which he counted as successes for Lebanese foreign policy:—

- (1) The establishment of a Ministry of Emigrants;
- (2) The Lebanese-Turkish Convention;
- (3) The establishment of diplomatic relations with the Vatican; and
- (4) The settlement of outstanding problems, and the imminent establishment of diplomatic relations with Italy.

In a carefully worded reference to Egypt, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said that the Lebanon's obligations would be fulfilled "in a spirit of sincere international co-operation." As regards Palestine, he promised the Arabs full support. The statement was on the whole well received. The Chamber ratified the Turkish-Lebanese Convention, the Civil Aviation Agreement with the United States, and the agreement with the Trans-Arabian Pipe-line Company.

3. At the sitting of the Chamber on 13th February the budget of the Ministry of National Defence was approved without debate. A suggestion was made that the Government should form a small naval force and also a small air force. The sum of £Leb.4,700,000 for the payment of the telephone system taken over from the French was voted after some discussion in the course of which some Deputies expressed the view that payment at this stage might prejudice the settlement of other questions outstanding with the French, *e.g.*, the Lebanese share in the profits of the Haifa refinery and the liquidation of

French properties in the Lebanon. A new Pharmacists' Law was also passed.

4. *L'Orient* reappeared on 18th February. It has now reverted to its policy of outright opposition to Greater Syria, and in an editorial declaration warned any of its former friends who might be tempted to approve of the Greater Syria scheme that they would be resisted by the paper.

5. Reaction in Government circles to the decision of His Majesty's Government to refer the Palestine question to United Nations Organisation appears on the whole to be favourable.

6. A former President, Ayoub Tabet, has died; he was given a State funeral on 16th February.

7. General Sir Ronald Adam, chairman of the British Council, arrived in Beirut on 13th February. A luncheon was given in his honour by the President on the following day.

Economic

8. Committees are to be appointed to investigate the books of local companies with a view to ascertaining their costs and fixing reasonable margins of profits for their products. It is feared that this measure may be used principally against the oil distributing companies.

9. The Council of Ministers is reported to have approved a project prepared by the Minister of National Economy regarding the institution of free trade between Arab States. According to the press, this project will be submitted to the Arab League at its next session.

10. According to a statement to the press by the Minister of National Economy, France has now decided to purchase citrus fruits to the value of 30 million francs.

11. An Anglo-American survey party has arrived for the purpose of investigating the suitability of the Lebanon for the construction of a pipe-line from the Anglo-Iranian Company's oil-fields in Persia to the Mediterranean.

12. The press has given considerable publicity to the inability of the United Kingdom to allocate any cotton piece-goods to the Lebanon during the current quarter.

LEBANON: SUMMARY No. 8

Period 19th February-31st March, 1947

(Received 23rd April)

(a) Political

His Majesty's Minister presented his letters of credence on 20th February.

2. The President of Syria, accompanied by members of his Government, paid a State visit to Beirut on 22nd-24th February. Receptions on a grand scale were organised by the Lebanese Government. This was the Syrian President's first State visit to the Lebanon and demonstrated present Syrian-Lebanese solidarity in the face of the Greater Syria danger.

3. During the early weeks of the period under review, foreign affairs, in particular the Egyptian and Palestine question, figured prominently. On 26th February the Minister for Foreign Affairs communicated to His Majesty's Minister the Egyptian reply to the Syrian-Lebanese offer of mediation in the Anglo-Egyptian dispute. It was uncompromising in tone and indicated that if the Syrian and Lebanese Governments received official assurances from His Majesty's Government that Egypt's full rights would be granted, the offer might be accepted. The Lebanese and Syrian Governments decided, nevertheless, to persist in their efforts to bring the parties together, and with this end in view made a further study of the question in preparation for the meeting of the Arab League Council.

4. Meanwhile, Ismail el Azhari and representatives of the pro-Egyptian Ashigga Party visited Beirut. Though they were received by the President of the Republic, the Speaker and the Prime Minister, the delegates received no official hospitality from the Lebanese Government. They succeeded in obtaining considerable publicity, but it is doubtful whether they made much impression in official circles. Before the Lebanese delegates left for the meeting of the Arab League Council, they undertook to use their best endeavours with the Egyptians for a reopening of negotiations; but the Prime Minister made it clear that if they failed they would be bound to support Egypt. The Minister for Foreign Affairs was disappointed at the eventual terms of the resolution in support of Egypt, and complained that he had not

received the lead he had expected from other Arab delegates.

5. The Palestine question has also received considerable attention. The decision of His Majesty's Government to refer the matter to United Nations Organisation was, on the whole, well received, and the Secretary of State's speech in the House of Commons on 18th February made a particularly good impression. Jemal Husseini, who visited Beirut during the first few days of March, made it clear to His Majesty's Minister that he was not dissatisfied with the turn events were taking.

6. With the return of the Prime Minister and Camille Chamoun, the Minister of Finance, who, on his way from the United Kingdom had attended the meeting of the Arab League in Cairo, public interest turned to internal politics. Apart from the imminence of the General Election, two earlier events made this inevitable, *i.e.*, the return of Fawzi Qawaqji, the Palestine leader, and that of Antoun Saadi, head of the Parti Populaire Syrien (or Popular Party). Before Fawzi Qawaqji's arrival on 2nd March, His Majesty's Minister had drawn the attention of the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs to the disadvantages of his return. This advice, owing to the manoeuvres of politicians who hoped to turn his reappearance to their advantage, was not heeded, and on 4th March Qawaqji proceeded to Tripoli. In the clashes which ensued between the supporters of Abdul Hamid Keramé and their opponents, sixteen people were killed on the spot (including Nafiz Maqaddem, leader of the anti-Keramé group), and some fifty were wounded. A curfew was immediately imposed and units of the Lebanese army patrolled the town. The administrator of Tripoli (the brother of Abdul Hamid Keramé), and the anti-Keramé Mohafez of North Lebanon were removed—the latter being replaced by Colonel Abdul Rifai, a nominee of Henri Bey Pharaon, who succeeded in forcing the hand of both the President and the Prime Minister in securing the appointment which, in view

of the unpopularity he incurred owing to his support of Abdul Hamid Keramé, he considered necessary for the protection of his own life. At the request of the Government Qawaqji left Tripoli for a mountain village, and half-hearted attempts were made to disarm the population. At the meetings of the Chamber on 6th and 12th March the Government were vehemently attacked for having taken no effective measures to prevent the incident. Hamid Frangieh was particularly outspoken in his criticism.

7. The return of Antoun Saadi coincided with that of Fawzi Qawaqji—in fact they arrived by the same plane on 2nd March. Although Saadi had been warned by responsible members of his party to avoid provocative utterances on his return, he preferred to ignore the advice, and in his speech spoke in uncompromising terms of his belief "in natural Syria of which the Lebanon was but a part." The Government reacted promptly, and on the next day Saadi was summoned by the Sûreté. He went into hiding and this was followed by the issue of a warrant for his arrest. A violent press duel ensued between the Parti Populaire Syrien and the Phalangist newspapers, which resulted in the suspension of the former. These developments caused acute embarrassment to Ne'meh Tabet, the leader of the party during the absence of Saadi, who had reached a *modus vivendi* on the basis of a recognition of the Lebanon within its present frontiers, and had succeeded in building up the influence of the party to a considerable extent. They were also unfortunate in that the Communists who with reason feared the party, were jubilant, and the possibility could not be excluded of at least a part of the party throwing in its weight with the supporters of King Abdullah's Greater Syria. At the present time Ne'meh Tabet is being subjected to considerable pressure to disown his leader, and a split in the party is not excluded.

8. As a result of these developments the internal situation deteriorated considerably. Moslem opinion was particularly incensed. The deterioration was further accentuated by dissensions within the Cabinet in which Kamal Jumblatt figured prominently. His proposals for closer economic co-operation with Syria (he openly advocated that the Syrian-Lebanese Customs Union should be developed into a full economic union) led to lively controversy, especially with the Acting

Minister of Finance. He followed this up with sensational revelations to the press regarding "the rottenness" of the Lebanese Administration, and was as a result involved in serious difficulties with the President. At one stage his resignation appeared imminent. The President did not, however, pursue the matter and Jumblatt has emerged with greater prestige.

9. In order to avoid a by-election to fill the vacancy created by the death of Dr. Ayoub Tabet, the Government had seriously to consider the advisability of advancing the date of the General Elections. A proposal supported by the President and Henri Pharaon for an increase in the number of Deputies (from 55 to 66) has also been under study. Pending consultation with Camille Chamoun no decision has been taken.

10. Camille Chamoun arrived in Beirut on 27th March with greatly increased prestige. It is generally expected that he will not only play a decisive rôle in the coming elections, but will also stand as a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic in 1949. Some sort of understanding between him and Kemal Jumblatt is now taken for granted, and there is no doubt that the President and the Constitutional Party leaders are considerably concerned.

11. In accordance with a Council of Ministers' decision military training and the wearing of uniform, badges and badges of rank by members of non-official organisations has been declared illegal. Paramilitary organisations, such as the Phalangists, Nejjadé, &c., are thus virtually abolished; the former anticipated the decision by voluntarily instructing its members not to wear uniform and have organised themselves as an ordinary political party.

12. The Lebanese Government have given their *agrément* to the appointment of Mgr. Marina, Apostolic Delegate to Turkey, as the first Papal Nuncio to the Lebanon. The appointment of a non-Frenchman as representative of the Vatican has given great satisfaction in Government circles.

13. Four members of the Society for Promotion of Cultural Relations between the Lebanon and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have returned from a visit to Russia. It is reported that the Government refused permission to the society to organise a reception on the occasion of their return. (This is believed to be the

first move in an anti-Communist drive which has been under study for some time.) Nevertheless, they have been able to secure considerable publicity in the press, and all four have in public expressed generally favourable views on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

14. The escape from Soviet Armenia and return to the Lebanon of a number of Armenian emigrants has made a considerable impression locally. This and the generally unfavourable reports which have been received from emigrants in Soviet Armenia is likely to damp the enthusiasm of would-be emigrants when, as is reported, emigration restarts in the early summer.

15. The debate on the budget was continued at the meetings of the Chamber on 27th February, 6th March and 12th March, and the budget was finally approved on the latter date. The last meeting of the Extraordinary Session took place on 13th March; the 1947 Ordinary Session opened on 18th. At the meeting on 31st a Ministry of Public Works supplementary budget allocating a sum of £Leb.25 million for road building and minor irrigation work was approved. Female suffrage was also discussed.

16. The Greater Syria question flared up as a result of an article which appeared in a Beirut weekly newspaper, *Kul Shai*, on 27th March. The newspaper reported an interview granted by King Abdullah in which His Majesty is alleged, while denying that his troops had been concentrated on the Syrian frontier, to have stated that the Transjordan army was capable of a blitz occupation and to have added that the Lebanon would be included in Greater Syria. A *démenti* was subsequently published by the Lebanese Government on the basis of a telegram received from the Transjordan Prime Minister to the effect that the report was a fabrication from beginning to end.

17. The *Eastern Times*, the only English-language newspaper in the Lebanon, has ceased publication. Efforts to revive it have so far not met with success.

(b) Economic

18. Camille Bay Chamoun took up his duties as Minister of Finance at the end of March. M. Busson, President of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban, has also arrived and has been discussing with the Lebanese Government the situation arising out of the termination of the French guarantee for the backing of the local currency. Reports about this denunciation appeared in the press, but with no apparent

effect on the local economic situation. Meantime, no agreement has been reached between the French and the Lebanese regarding an allocation of hard currencies for 1946, and although the Lebanese have at their disposal sufficient sterling for their immediate requirements, they are reported to be short of dollars.

19. On 31st March the Parliamentary Finance Commission approved the draft law relating to the adhesion of the Lebanon to the International Monetary Fund and Bank.

20. Two representatives of Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners have arrived for the purpose of beginning investigations under the firm's contract with the Lebanese Government. The French have made further efforts to secure permission for Seriac to operate in the Lebanon, and also renewed their request for a contract for this concern similar to the one granted to Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners.

21. The Lebanese press has criticised the Syrian authorities for their alleged refusal to negotiate with the Transarabian Pipe-line Company except on the understanding that any projected pipe-line through Syria should end at a terminal on the Syrian coast. The matter was raised in the Chamber of Deputies and the Lebanese Government took it up with the Syrian Government.

22. The workers of the Tobacco Monopoly have been on strike since early in the month, in an effort to secure the recognition of their claim to a bonus of one month's wages. There has also been some unrest among the labour employed by the oil companies, who wanted a similar bonus, but a strike was averted.

23. Middle East Air Lines have decided to institute a weekly service from Beirut to Angora. The Compagnie Générale de Transports have started operating from Beirut to Lagos. It has been reported in the press that a Norwegian delegation came to Beirut for the purpose of negotiating permission to operate an air line between Norway and the Lebanon.

24. There are conflicting reports regarding the Government's intentions on the subject of the projected new international airport at Khalde. It is understood that the Civil Aeronautics Board in Washington have now sent to the Lebanese authorities their observations on Mr. Shaw Maclaren's proposals, and that these observations are unfavourable. While it is still possible that the contract for designing the airport will be given to Mr.

Maclaren, there appears to be some support in official circles for the view that the contract should be divided among British and American firms.

25. Two Roumanian representatives have been in Beirut, and their activities included offers to supply petroleum products. Their efforts to do business appear to have been unsuccessful. Reports of Russian commercial activity have not been substantiated by

any concrete evidence, with the exception that the Russian commercial attaché in Beirut is known to have offered fertilisers to Egypt.

26. It is understood that an order for the broadcast transmitter referred to in Weekly Political Summary No. 6 for the week ended 11th February has been placed with Marconis.

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No. 21

LEBANON: SUMMARY No. 9

Month ending 30th April, 1947

(a) Political

The electoral campaign has been in full swing since 8th April, when the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved by Presidential decree and it was announced that the elections would take place on 25th May and 1st June. The decision to advance the date of the elections was taken to avoid a by-election in Beirut to fill the vacancy created by the death of Dr. Ayoub Tabet and interference with the summer tourist season.

2. There has been great activity in all five electoral districts, but it has been specially marked in Mount Lebanon. On his return from London at the end of March, Camille Chamoun established contact with Kamal Jumblatt and his Phalangist allies and appeared to avoid association with his former colleagues of the Constitutional Party. Both men publicly stressed their determination to work for the return of clean elements to the new Chamber, and, as a result, considerably increased their popularity in the country as a whole. There is little doubt, however, that, while genuinely desiring honest administration, they were both looking ahead to the Presidential elections in 1949 and wished to eliminate as many as possible of President Khouri's personal supporters. (It is noteworthy that, largely as a result of their influence, a scheme for increasing the number of Deputies, which would have improved President Khouri's chances of re-election, was eliminated.) In subsequent negotiations with the Constitutional Party, they raised objection in particular to the inclusion in the proposed joint list of Selim Khouri, the President's brother, Emile Lahoud, the ex-Minister of Finance, and two or three other prominent

members of the Constitutional Party. The intransigence of both parties caused considerable concern to the President—he realised that a split in the Constitutional Party and the formation of two rival lists would be greatly to the advantage of Emile Eddé and the pro-French National *bloc*, who were actively preparing for the elections. He professed that he had no objection to the replacement of elements in his old party that had been compromised in the eyes of the public, but insisted that account had to be taken of electoral forces and that, in any case, such changes cannot take place without long preparation. Chamoun's position was clearly one of difficulty, but he nevertheless appeared confident that he would be able to make satisfactory arrangements with the Constitutional Party (particularly with the Druse Emir Majid Arslan) on the one hand and with the Jumblatt (a Druse and a rival of the Emir Majid Arslan) Party on the other. The situation was further complicated by apparently excessive demands on the part of the Phalangists and determination of Jumblatt to support them. At one stage, relations between Chamoun and Jumblatt were strained almost to the point of rupture. After much manoeuvring, a compromise was reached on 27th March by which only Selim Khouri and Emile Lahoud were eliminated from the list of the Constitutional Party, who agreed to join forces with Chamoun and Jumblatt. The Phalangists, however, were dissatisfied and withdrew their support. At the same time, Selim Khouri announced his intention of forming a second Constitutional Party list. It is generally believed that this compromise resulted in a considerable loss of

popularity with the general public for Chamoun and Jumblatt, but that, nevertheless, the list represents a strong electoral combination. It is significant that they were only partially successful in eliminating the personal supporters of President Khouri.

3. In north Lebanon the outstanding development has been the refusal of Abdul Hamid Karami to stand for election. There is little doubt that he has of late lost considerable influence, and the removal of his brother from the post of president of the Tripoli Municipality following the clash reported in paragraph 6 of Beirut Summary No. 8, convinced him that the Government would use the administrative machine against him in the elections. Rather than risk failure he preferred not to stand. He openly proclaimed his intention of retiring from politics and giving up his Lebanese nationality and transferring his allegiance to Syria; he professed that the Lebanese experiment had failed and hinted that he would revert to his pre-1943 policy of union between Syria and the Lebanon. He visited Damascus and afterwards informed the press that he had told the Syrian President that he could no longer take part in the political life of the Lebanon, adding "that it was the first duty of a ruler to free himself from partiality towards his son and his brother" (reference to President Khouri). In the absence of opposition, his opponent, Hamid Frangieh, has gone ahead with the formation of his electoral list. Abdul Karami is, however, being continually pressed by his supporters to reverse his decision, and the possibility of his doing so cannot be excluded.

4. The situation in south Lebanon has been tense, owing to the uncompromising attitude of the two rival Shia leaders, Adel Usseyran and Ahmed el Assad. The latter is the father-in-law of the present Minister of the Interior, Sabri Hamadi, and the former has the support of the Lebanese Prime Minister. Clashes occurred between the supporters of the rival leaders on 21st and 25th April, but fortunately with no loss of life. Reports have been received that Ahmed el Assad has been bringing Arab villagers from across the Palestine frontier with the intention of using them to influence the electorate.

5. The prospects are that in Beirut the elections will be keenly contested. Sami Solh, Abdullah Yafi and Hussein Oueini (all three Sunni Moslems) have joined

forces (Habib Abi Chahla, ex-president of the Chamber appears on the same list).

6. Finally, in the Beqaa, where activity has been less marked than in other districts, it is widely believed that Henri Pharaon will succeed in persuading the local Greek Catholic candidate (a member of the prominent Skaff family) to stand down in his favour, and that with the lavish use of money, he will be able to secure the return to the Chamber of himself and his supporters.

7. Complaints of Government interference and fears that the elections will not be free have been prominently expressed in the Opposition press. The possibility of serious clashes between armed supporters of the various rival leaders cannot, unfortunately, be excluded.

8. In spite of preoccupation with internal politics, the Palestine and Egyptian questions have attracted considerable attention. At a meeting of the Chamber on 2nd April, the Minister for Foreign Affairs read a report on the Cairo meeting of the Arab League Council and a resolution of support for Palestine and Egypt was passed. The Lebanese Minister in Washington and the Lebanese Chargé d'Affaires in London have been appointed to represent the Lebanon at the special meeting of the United Nations Assembly.

9. Several meetings between members of the Syrian and Lebanese Governments have taken place, and questions affecting the continuation of the cereals monopolies in both countries and the supply of cereals to the Lebanon by Syria were discussed, as was also the passage of the American pipeline through Syria (see "Economic" below).

10. Further approaches have been made to the Lebanese Government by the Spanish Government in connexion with the establishment of diplomatic relations. In view of the United Nations decision regarding Spain, the Lebanese Government have decided not to proceed with the matter.

(b) Economic

11. On 1st April the Chamber of Deputies passed a Bill empowering the Government to join the International Monetary Fund and Bank.

M. Busson, president of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban, has submitted proposals to the Lebanese Government under which that part of the Lebanese franc holdings which is held as cover for the currency

would be guaranteed for a period of twenty or twenty-five years through the International Monetary Fund; the remainder of the holdings would be liquidated over a term of years by the purchases of capital equipment in France and by allocation from France of hard currencies. It is not yet known whether proposals of this nature are likely to be acceptable to the Lebanese Government or, for that matter, to the French themselves, since M. Busson does not represent the French Government.

12. M. van Zeeland arrived in Beirut on 12th April and remained for two weeks. He hopes to return at the end of June with a preliminary report for the Lebanese Government.

13. The Council of Ministers has decided that the experts sent out by Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners shall be attached to the Ministry of National Economy.

14. Personnel of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company have arrived in Beirut, which, it is understood, may be selected as the company's centre of distribution for the Middle East for material arriving from the United States. Discussions have continued throughout the month between the Lebanese and Syrian Governments regarding the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company's proposals. It is generally thought that the terminal of the projected pipeline will be in south Lebanon, and the principle bone of contention between the Syrians and the Lebanese appears to be the method of dividing the expected revenue between the two States. Final agreement has not yet been announced between the two Governments and the company has not yet signed a convention with the Syrians.

15. An Indian Trade Mission arrived in Beirut on 8th April and spent four days in the country.

16. The Director of Communications states that the Lebanese Government have decided to authorise the Damascus-Homs Prolongement Railways to operate the Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli line for a trial period until the end of the current year. However, no agreement has yet been signed with the company.

(c) Press

Palestine

The absence of comment in French and pro-French papers is noteworthy. Extreme Nationalist papers led the campaign against British policy in Palestine. Moderate Nationalist and Communist papers struck the same note, but at a lower

pitch. When it comes to the Palestine question the general tone of the Nationalist papers is anti-British. The Arabs are repeatedly warned that the British decision to refer the question to U.N.O. is but an attempt to gain time for the Jews to infiltrate in large number into Palestine, and that therefore it was high time the Arabs acted. The unanimous decision taken by the Political Committee of the Arab League to support Palestine to the very end was heartily welcomed, and the contrast between the British reaction to the Arab movement in 1936-39 and their reaction to Zionist terrorism is vividly drawn.

Egypt and the Sudan

Beirut (N.) holds the record in the number of articles which reflect on British policy in the Nile Valley. Most of them, however, are in the form of messages from its correspondent in Cairo or of articles by Hassan Lutfi. Extreme Nationalist papers come a close second. The points emphasised are: (a) the unity of the Nile Valley is vital for the very existence of Egypt, (b) the British administration of the Sudan has not given the desired results, especially when compared with the results achieved by the Soviet administration of equally backward countries, (c) the Egyptians are not prepared to bargain, but will fight for their rights to the very end, (d) the Omma Party, which was created by the British, is beginning to disintegrate. Six articles representing the British view appeared in the Arabic press during the month.

Transjordan

The invitation said to have been extended to King Abdullah to be the guest of the British navy in the Red Sea is suspected to have a political objective, especially as regards Aqaba, which is still a bone of contention between King Ibn Saud and the Hashimite monarch.

France is suspected of sponsoring the Greater Syria project, and the Iraqi-Transjordan Treaty is looked upon as a step to an Iraqi-Transjordan Union which might lead to the revivification of the Sadabad Pact in the form of treaties of alliance among the countries concerned.

Soviet Union

With the exception of sporadic items which give the impression that Russia will support the Arabs at U.N.O., there are no articles which might be regarded as pro-Soviet propaganda. On the contrary, one of the French papers carried an article

which might be taken as anti-Soviet. Another French paper reported interviews with members of the Lebanese delegation to Moscow, but the paper does not seem to share all their points of view. Non-Communist Armenian papers are interested in Russia only inasmuch as it affects the Armenian question. With Turkey as the traditional enemy of Armenians, all papers agree in attacking any Power which tries to help Turkey.

Internal

The electoral campaign eclipsed all other items. The situation may be summed up as follows: (a) Coalition for the elections is universally condemned, even by pro-

Government papers, and the need for a radical reform in the election system is universally felt; (b) Youth elements are beginning to take active interest, and they seem determined to put an end to the prestige and influence of the "traditional leaders" who have so far been living as parasites on the mass of the population. This is why, it seems, these traditional leaders have not been able as yet to form their lists of candidates. All attempts at coalition have so far failed, and the Constitutional Party has been the target of vehement attacks by French and pro-French papers, and even by some Nationalist papers, at the head of which is *Beirut*.

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No. 22

LEBANON: SUMMARY No. 10

Month ending 31st May, 1947

(a) Political

The period under reference has been marked by great political activity, which naturally increased as the polling day (25th May) approached. The following are the principal developments in the pre-electoral situation in the five constituencies:—

In Mount Lebanon, the decision of Sheikh Selim Khouri and Emile Lahoud, following their exclusion from the official Constitutional Party list, to form an independent list caused anxiety to the President, who realised that Eddé and his supporters would be thereby strengthened. He made frantic efforts to induce his brother to desist, but was unsuccessful. He was equally unsuccessful in convincing Chamoun and Jumblatt that his brother was not standing with his connivance. Jumblatt threatened to resign, but with some difficulty was induced to stay in the Cabinet when satisfaction in the form of the transfer of certain suspect Civil Servants was given him. In South Lebanon the dangerous situation resulting from the intense rivalry of the two Shia leaders, Ahmed el Assad and Adel Usseyran (supported respectively by the Minister of the Interior and by the Prime Minister), only improved when, after much manoeuvring, Ahmed el Assad agreed to take the Prime Minister on his own list.

The support of both factions being assured, Riad Solh's success was beyond question. Prior to this arrangement, differences between the Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior resulted in repercussions in the Beqaa, and the latter announced his intention of joining forces with Henri Pharaon's rival, Joseph Skaff. A compromise was eventually reached whereby Skaff transferred his candidature to South Lebanon and thus made possible renewed co-operation between Henri Pharaon and Sabri Hamadi. In Beirut the strong Government-sponsored list faced two semi-completed lists headed by Omar Beyhum and ex-President Alfred Nacacche. The Communist, Mustapha Ariss, figured on the latter's list as a Sunni Moslem candidate. In North Lebanon, after much vacillation, Abdul Hamid Kerami made it known that he preferred not to stand. Without him the opposition was virtually hopeless and the field was left open to the Government-sponsored list headed by Hamid Frangieh.

2. Repeated assurances by the Government that the elections would be free naturally inspired little confidence among the Opposition. During the campaign the freedom of the press and of association was almost unlimited, but there is no doubt that Opposition supporters, particularly in Mount Lebanon were subjected to

indirect pressure by the Government. The attitude of foreign representatives has been discreet and such foreign interference as may have taken place has been carefully camouflaged.

3. The country went to the polls on 25th May and the day passed off without serious disturbances. In Beirut, however, a few hours after the opening of the voting booths, the Opposition candidates withdrew on the grounds of Government interference. They alleged that in many voting centres their supporters were prevented from voting by thugs in the pay of the Government and even by the Security Forces. A protest was addressed to the President calling on him to declare the elections void. The results in North Lebanon, Beqaa and Beirut became known late on 25th May—in each case 100 per cent. victory was registered in favour of the Government-sponsored candidates. In South Lebanon, Ahmed el Assad and five of his supporters, as compared with one, Adel Usseyran, on the rival list, were successful. Riad Solh, who enjoyed the support of both factions, was also elected. Two candidates who failed to obtain absolute majorities were obliged to face the electorate a second time on 1st June (ballotage). In Mount Lebanon, however, delay in the announcement of the results made it evident that some hitch had occurred and rumours of gross irregularities became immediately widespread. On 27th May Jumblatt announced that he and Chamoun had insisted on the immediate removal of the Mouhafez of Mount Lebanon, who, he alleged, had been guilty of falsifying the count in order to secure the election of Sheikh Selim Khouri, and that the Government had agreed. Both Ministers had themselves previously attempted to verify the votes. Jumblatt subsequently resigned and Chamoun also tendered his resignation but withdrew it when he was given satisfaction in the form of the establishment of a Committee of Enquiry, which, under his supervision and that of the Minister of Justice, would prepare a report for the Chamber on the validity of the elections. When the Mount Lebanon results were published, twelve candidates from the official Constitutional Party list (including Jumblatt and Chamoun) and one from the non-official list (Sheikh Selim Khouri) were successful. Four candidates came up for ballotage. Neither Eddé nor any of his supporters were successful.

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4. Indignation among Opposition elements at the irregularities which had marked the elections in Beirut and Mount Lebanon was intense and was widely re-echoed in the press and among the general public. Unsuccessful candidates loudly called for the annulment of the elections and a mass protest meeting was attended on 30th May by Mgr. Moubarak, the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut, who addressed a violent letter to the President calling on him to resign, Kerami, Nacacche, Beyhum, members of the Phalange, the National Bloc and the Communist Party. Jumblatt was also present. Preparations were made for strikes and demonstrations on the following day and Government supporters retaliated by threatening counter-demonstrations. The Government reacted with vigour and wisely forbade all demonstrations. The strike in Beirut was virtually a complete failure largely owing to the lack of homogeneity in the ranks of the Opposition elements and, with the exception of Tripoli, the results were similar in other Lebanese towns. Business in Tripoli came to a standstill, but this was due not so much to solidarity with the Opposition as to fear resulting from a clash between the supporters of Kerami and the Security Forces, which resulted in the death of one gendarme and two young men.

5. At the ballotage on 1st June, both supporters of Ahmed el Assad were successful. In Mount Lebanon three candidates from the official Constitutional Party list and one (not Emile Lahoud) on the unofficial list were successful.

6. In an interview which he gave journalists the Prime Minister, Riad Solh, stated: "On the whole the present elections were better than those held in the past." From the President downwards it is freely admitted that interference and irregularities took place, the official excuse offered being over-zeal on the part of the pro-Government officials, particularly the Mouhafez of Mount Lebanon. It is noteworthy that criticism of the Government's clumsy tactics is by no means confined to the Opposition—Government supporters, who maintain, probably with justification, that without irregularities 90 per cent. of the Government-sponsored list would have been successful in Beirut and some 70 per cent. in Mount Lebanon, are almost equally indignant.

7. It is believed that when the Chamber meets, a serious attempt will be made to

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give some satisfaction to public opinion and that a number of the more doubtful candidates will be sacrificed. Some good may even come of the unfortunate developments which marked the elections as the Government are known to be seriously contemplating an immediate modification of the Electoral Law and of the Constitution.

8. All concerned, the President, Prime Minister and not least Henri Pharaon, Minister for Foreign Affairs, have suffered loss of prestige, but it is probable that the loss is transitory. Riad Solh, in the course of the campaign, gave further proof of his virtuosity as a politician, and the results which he achieved were at the cost of considerable personal sacrifice to himself in that he was obliged to break with several of his oldest supporters, notably Joseph Salem. It is unfortunate that the actual polling day was marred by patent irregularities and the Prime Minister cannot escape, at least, a charge of gross clumsiness. He has, however, achieved what was his main objective, namely, bloodless elections and a homogeneous Chamber, from which elements hostile to the independence movement were excluded. It is also to his credit that no Communists were included in any of the Government-sponsored lists, and that as a result no Communists are members of the new Chamber.

9. In spite of preoccupation with the elections, the problem of Palestine and the extraordinary session of the United Nations Assembly has received its share of attention. Opposition to the establishment of a Committee of Enquiry has been widely expressed and there is a general feeling of distrust of the outcome. The Russian attitude came as an unwelcome surprise and there is a growing feeling among the general public that the Arabs will have to rely on their own strength to secure a satisfactory solution.

10. Owing to difficulties experienced in connexion with the supply of cereals and the passage through Syria of the American pipe-line (see below), relations between Beirut and Damascus have lost something of their cordiality.

11. It has been announced that Victor Khouri, councillor at the Lebanese Legation in London, has been appointed Minister in place of Camille Chamoun.

12. The American destroyer *Compton* visited Beirut from 2nd-6th May.

13. Two representatives of the Erivan Government have arrived in Beirut in con-

nexion with the resumption of emigration to Soviet Armenia.

14. Early in May the Lebanese Government, who were disinclined to pay for cereals the high prices demanded by the Syrian Government, requested the International Emergency Food Council for an emergency allocation of 30,000-40,000 tons of wheat. In the course of subsequent negotiations with the Syrian Government they were informed by the Syrian Prime Minister that, in view of the poor crop prospects, supplies would not be available from Syria, and the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs requested His Majesty's Minister to invoke the assistance of His Majesty's Government. The unfavourable reports on crop prospects are undoubtedly exaggerated, and it is estimated that if adequate measures are taken, adequate supplies for both Syria and the Lebanon will be available locally. As far as the Lebanese are concerned, however, the financial difficulty remains and unless supplies are available from alternative sources they will be obliged either to continue the present subsidy or to increase the price of bread. According to the Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs the Lebanese have succeeded in obtaining an allocation of 25,000 tons of wheat for the period June to August, provided this quantity is supplied either by the Argentine or by Turkey. No agreement has been reached with the former (the Lebanese being unable to procure the necessary dollar exchange) and negotiations with the latter are now proceeding.

15. Negotiations between the Syrian and Lebanese Governments in connexion with the passage through the Levant States of the American oil pipe-line (Trans-Arabian Pipe-Line Company) continued throughout the month but no agreement has been reached. The Lebanese complain of the vacillation and hard bargaining of the Syrians, particularly in connexion with the division of the dollar proceeds.

(b) Economic

16. No further progress has been made by the French and the Lebanese in respect to the allocation by the former of hard currencies. There is still apparently an appreciable amount of sterling available, but the dollar shortage continues. Sterling on the free market fluctuated between 895 and 945 piastres during the month against an official rate of 882; the corresponding dollar price on the free market varied

between 280 and 302 against the official rate of 221, and that of gold sovereigns between 3,770 and 4,265. Despite the alleged dollar shortage the Ministry of National Economy announced that an allocation of 1,300,000 dollars would be made for the import of essential commodities, chief among these being food-stuffs and agricultural and industrial machinery. The note issue at the end of March decreased from £L.136,500,000 to £L.135,500,000.

17. According to figures published by the Statistics Department of the Ministry of National Economy the cost-of-living index for May rose to 498 as against 495 for the preceding month (June-July 1939 = 100). This was due to a rise in the cost of certain food-stuffs during the month. Prices of stable commodities have remained fairly steady, but the elections caused a diminution in wholesale trade, where prices tended to fall. The market is over-stocked with luxury goods and if a general decline in prices sets in, as is expected, it is in the luxury class of goods that this will first be felt.

18. No accurate unemployment figures are available. The Ministry of Public Works' approved programme will, it is estimated, provide work for 32,000 labourers over a period of seventeen months.

19. The railway line between Nakoura and Tripoli was reopened for goods traffic on 23rd May following the conclusion-agreement between the Lebanese Government and the D.H.P. The agreement, which is for a period of nine months, provides for the management and operation of the railway by the company. The Turkish Government is reported to have offered the use of a number of wagons bought by them from U.N.R.R.A.

(c) Press

Palestine.—Two Arabic nationalist papers share between them the record for the number of articles published that are critical of Anglo-Saxon policy in Palestine. The general tone is one of (a) disappointment that U.N.O. has failed the Arabs and turned out to be a tool in the hands of the Big Powers; (b) lack of faith in the newly appointed Committee of Enquiry; and (c) an ardent appeal to the Arabs to take the matter in their own hands. Some papers were suspicious of Russia's attitude at U.N.O.; but Communist papers tried to show that this attitude was per-

fectly in harmony with the Arab point of view.

Egypt and the Sudan.—Russia's unexpected attitude at U.N.O. has made some nationalist papers wonder whether Russia and Britain have agreed on their respective zones of influence in the Middle East at the expense of the Arab States. A French paper reviews the situation in the light of the policy of the new Governor-General of the Sudan and of U.N.O.'s attitude towards the Palestine question, and comes to the conclusion that Egypt will not refer her question to U.N.O. Anti-British papers ascribe the backwardness of the mass of the population in Egypt and the Sudan to the British administration, and quote articles which show that Egypt and the Sudan have always been an integral unity.

Transjordan.—One Arabic paper only, so far, looks upon the Iraq-Transjordan Treaty as a good precedent which should be encouraged among the Arab States. Suspicion is expressed in more than one paper of the correspondence exchanged between the Maronite Patriarch and King Abdullah immediately after the publication of the White Paper on the Greater Syria project. The Patriarch is quoted as saying that he would welcome union with Syria if only he could be sure that justice would be meted out equally to all, irrespective of creed or sect; but, unfortunately, he does not have sufficient proof that this would be the case.

Russia.—There is little comment in the French and Arabic press. Anti-Communist Armenian papers launched a vehement attack on communism, advising Russia to give up her expansionist policy and comply with Bevin's proposals for a four-Power pact.

Internal.—During the first part of the month the press was almost unanimous in condemning the Solh Cabinet as unfit to supervise the elections. As the day for the elections drew nearer, the anti-Government campaign grew more violent, and the Prime Minister was the main target of attack, with the Home Minister as a close second. It was noted that the Government was determined to eliminate all its strong opponents, cost what it may, and the tone, which was at first defiant and threatening, gradually became malicious and invective. It is noteworthy that elements with widely divergent political trends came together in one solid Opposition front. After the results of the elections were known and it

became evident that the Government had had its way, and after Mgr. Mubarak's open letter to the President of the Republic, discrimination began to be made in nationalist papers between "Eddeism" and disinterested national Opposition, and the former was attacked just as vehemently as, if not more, than the Government was. The elections were labelled as fraudulent and illegal, even by certain Cabinet Ministers who succeeded in the elections, and the Government was urged to declare them null and void. There was a hint at foreign intervention, mainly American. Column after column of instances which

proved fraud and coercion appeared in almost all papers. A few papers were suspended, and a committee was appointed to investigate into the validity of the elections and report to the Chamber at its first session. Opposition papers looked upon this last measure as an anæsthetic, and Riad Solh was accused of trying to have a Chamber which would ratify a secret agreement he had concluded in Paris with regard to certain French interests in the country. It was alleged also that he aspired for the presidency of the republic, counting for his success on the support of the Islamic world.

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No. 23

LEBANON: SUMMARY No. 11

Month ending 30th June, 1947

(Received 24th July)

(a) Political

Dissatisfaction with the elections continues to be widespread and is being exploited by critics of the régime. Nevertheless, there has been some slackening of Opposition activity and in general the situation has improved. On 8th June the majority of newspaper owners addressed a letter of protest to the President announcing that the press intended to boycott the new Chamber and demanding new elections. In this connexion it is noteworthy that the owners and editors of normally pro-Government newspapers who joined in this *démarche* were either themselves candidates in the election (and were unsuccessful) or were closely associated with particular candidates. The attitude of the press was subsequently discussed at meetings of the Newspaper Syndicate, but Government supporters were successful in manoeuvring to secure a change of ground and, when a decision was reached to call for the strike, it was in connexion with the administrative suspension of the newspapers by the Government and not on the election issue. The Minister of the Interior announced that he would release such papers as had been suspended and undertook, pending the passing of the new Press Law, to resort to administrative suspension as little as possible. This failed to give satisfaction, and on 30th June the press decided on a three-day

strike. Four minor bomb incidents (explosions were heard at the Chamber of Deputies and also at the house of the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Henri Pharaon) occurred between 11th and 17th June. There were no casualties and little damage was done. An unsuccessful Shia candidate has been arrested in connexion with the incidents, which are attributed to Opposition elements. The police are also actively pursuing Antoun Saadi, leader of the Popular Party (P.P.S.), who has been in hiding since a warrant for his arrest was issued following his return in March—see paragraph 7 of Beirut Summary No. 8. Events in the Jebel Druse and the resulting tension between Damascus and Soueida have given rise to considerable uneasiness in the Lebanon. On 29th June the Opposition organised a meeting at the house of Omar Bayhum, the Beirut notable, which was attended by Abdul Hamid Karameh, ex-President Nacacche, the Phalangist leader, &c. Violent anti-Government speeches were made. It is noteworthy, however, that the meeting was far less well attended than that organised by Mgr. Moubarak towards the end of May (see paragraph 4 of Summary No. 10) and it is doubtful whether from the point of view of the Opposition the meeting was much of a success.

2. The Government resigned on 8th June. The composition of the new

Cabinet, which was formed immediately, is as follows:—

Riad Solh (Sunni): Prime Minister.
 Gabriel Murr (Greek Orthodox): Vice-Premier and Public Works.
 Mohammed Aboud Abdul Rezzek (Sunni): Finance.
 Camille Chamoun (Maronite): Interior and Public Health.
 Hamid Frangieh (Maronite): Foreign Affairs and Education.
 General Naufal (Greek Catholic): National Economy and Agriculture.
 Ahmed Husseini (Shia): Justice.
 Emir Majid Arslan (Druse): Defence and Posts and Telegraphs.

Attempts by Riad Solh to form a Coalition Government failed owing to the refusal of Henri Pharaon to participate. This also led to the inclusion of a non-Deputy Greek Catholic (General Naufal) in the Cabinet. Pharaon's relations with the President have become strained and it is probable that he is attempting to gain popularity by swimming with the Opposition current and joining in criticism of the elections. Following the appointment of Camille Chamoun as Minister of the Interior, Sheikh Selim Houry, the President's brother, tendered his resignation from the Chamber. It has not, however, been accepted yet.

3. The Chamber met in extraordinary session on 9th June, when Sabri Hamadi, former Minister of the Interior, was elected president. The Elections Validation Committee was also appointed and included Henri Pharaon (president) and Habib Abi Chahla. At the sitting of 17th June the statement of Government policy was read by the Prime Minister. Riad Solh emphasised that the elections represented a plebiscite on national policy since 1943, a policy based on independence and close co-operation between Christians and Moslems. It had been necessary to work for the exclusion from the new Chamber of all extremist elements. It was natural that the elections, which were the first since independence had been achieved, should have been marked by some confusion; complaints were being examined by the Chamber's Validation Committee. The Prime Minister stressed the fact that during the pre-electoral campaign a high degree of liberty had been given to the press. The Electoral Law had, however, proved itself to be defective and a new Electoral Law was under preparation. Promised reforms also included new

legislation on local government and a new Press Law. In the debate which followed the Government was strongly criticised by Kamal Jumblatt and Adel Osseiran. Confidence in the Government was voted by all Deputies with the exception of Jumblatt and Osseiran, who abstained. It was announced that the Chamber would meet again on 1st July to consider the report of the Validation Committee. It is known that the committee are recommending the invalidation of the election of three Deputies, two in Mount Lebanon and one in South Lebanon.

4. In spite of preoccupation with internal politics, considerable attention has focussed on foreign affairs. On instructions from His Majesty's Government, His Majesty's Legation, in an effort to counteract the Arab League decision of support for Egypt and to secure if possible the issue by the Syrian Government of suitable instructions to their representative on the Security Council, explained to the Lebanese Government the long-term Arab interests in a satisfactory solution of the Anglo-Egyptian dispute. The Lebanese President and Prime Minister, who were informed that the least His Majesty's Government could expect was Arab support for a vote at the Security Council for a reopening of negotiations between His Majesty's Government and the Egyptian Government, were most receptive. The Prime Minister expressed the view that there was no chance of the Egyptians being persuaded to desist from submitting their case to U.N.O. but that in the course of the Security Council meeting it might be possible to establish unofficial contacts between the British and Egyptian delegates which might lead to a satisfactory solution. He was doubtful, however, regarding the suggestion that the recommendation by the Security Council for the reopening of negotiations should be coupled with some sort of general endorsement of the Bevin-Sidki agreement and that the Arab Governments should support the principle of the right of self-determination for the Sudanese. The Prime Minister agreed to proceed to Damascus to discuss the matter with the Syrian President and he left on 24th June together with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. On their return the latter informed His Majesty's Minister that they had reached agreement in principle with the Syrians but that details should be elaborated between the Syrians and His Majesty's Minister in Damascus.

5. Owing to the imminent change of Government, the Lebanon was represented by the Lebanese Minister in Cairo, at the meeting of the Political Committee of the Arab League held in Cairo early in June to discuss the Palestine problem. The Lebanese Government are opposed to the boycott of the United Nations Committee of Enquiry on Palestine and the Lebanese representative was instructed to express this point of view at the meeting. The day of the committee's arrival in Palestine (16th June) was, however, marked by a general strike throughout the Lebanon.

6. Following the appointment of Hamid Frangieh as Minister for Foreign Affairs there has been some improvement in Franco-Lebanese relations. It is known that Hamid Bey was not in favour of the intransigent policy adopted by his predecessors in connexion with the settlement of problems outstanding with the French (particularly the liquidation of French properties) and agreement has already been reached for the payment to the French of considerable sums in connexion with the purchase of the telephone system.

7. The decoration of Grand Order of the Légion d'Honneur has been conferred by the French Government on the Maronite and Syrian Catholic Patriarchs. Monseigneur René le Prêtre, the Apostolic Delegate, left Beirut on a French sloop early in the month. The first Papal Legate, Monseigneur Marina, presented his Letters of Credence to the President on 24th June.

8. The Greek and Swedish Ministers (M. Triantaphyllidis and M. Bagge) have also presented their Letters of Credence.

9. The Russian steamer *Popeda*, which arrived in Beirut at the end of the month, is expected to leave with some 2,000 Armenian emigrants early in July. The policy adopted by previous Governments of non-opposition to the repatriation of Armenians to Soviet Armenia is now the subject of some criticism, particularly by the Minister of the Interior. The latter contends that in the near future the Lebanon will need all its available man-power in connexion with the American pipe-line and other projects and that the departure of Armenian artisans prejudices the Lebanese economy. He also criticises the policy apparently adopted by those responsible for the movement of encouraging the emigration of non-Communist elements while leaving Communists to carry on their work in the country. The Minister of the Interior is

known to be opposed to the admission of a Russian-sponsored recruiting committee.

(b) Economic

10. Figures have been published showing the imports and exports for the first quarter of 1947. This shows imports for Syria and the Lebanon amounting to a value of £ (Lebanese or Syrian) 85,781,000 against exports totalling 21,816,000, the adverse balance being 63,965,000. Imports were received chiefly from the United States and United Kingdom, while Palestine received approximately 40 per cent. of the exports from the two countries. Palestine is the only country with which a satisfactory trade balance was maintained. The Lebanese Ministry of National Economy is fully aware of the serious drain on the country's limited resources of foreign exchange and several statements have been issued during the month to the effect that the level of exports must be raised.

11. A Roumanian trade mission consisting of five members visited Lebanon during the month under the leadership of Dr. J. Bercovitz, who was formerly Roumanian Trade Representative in the Levant States. No agreement appears to have been reached on any commercial matters. The mission had, as its primary objective, the purchase of wool to be woven in Roumania; a proportion of the finished article would then be returned as payment for the raw materials supplied. With regard to other exports from Roumania, difficulty was encountered in the mission's alleged insistence on payment in hard currencies and barter arrangements were not apparently regarded with favour by either party. The leader of the mission stated, however, that quantities of Roumanian timber would be arriving in the course of the next few months. The mission showed little interest in the Lebanese offer of citrus fruit, as the Lebanese asked for payment in hard currency.

12. Dr. J. Murray, Statistical Adviser to the British Middle East Office, arrived in Beirut on 24th May on the invitation of the Lebanese Government and spent a week in making a preliminary survey of the statistical data necessary for the establishment of a social insurance scheme which is to be studied by Professor Robson of London University in September. Dr. Murray, who is returning to Beirut in September to collaborate with Professor Robson, has advised the Lebanese Government to institute a central statistical bureau on modern lines.

This proposal was favourably received by the Minister of National Economy and it is hoped that an official invitation may shortly be made to Dr. Murray to undertake this work early in 1948.

13. The Minister for Foreign Affairs informed His Majesty's Legation in confidence that an agreement has already been signed by the Syrian and Lebanese Governments for the passage of the Trans-Arabian Company's pipe-line to a point in South Lebanon between Sidon and Tyre. Publication of this information has been withheld until after the Syrian elections, although certain local papers have published unconfirmed statements that the agreement has in fact been signed. This has met with an official denial from the Syrian authorities.

14. A local newspaper reports that an agreement has been reached between the Government and a French company (probably the *Compagnie Française des Pétroles*) for the establishment of an oil refinery at Tripoli to replace the one built by the French during the war and subsequently taken over and operated by the Iraq Petroleum Company. The existing refinery is not sufficient for present needs either as regards output or quality, and the new refinery, which would produce for export to France, would presumably be on extensive modern lines.

15. Anxiety is still felt about cereals position. Unofficial estimates of the cereals crop, which is never sufficient for local needs, put it at about 40 per cent. below the yield of a normal year and no agreement has yet been reached with Syria for the delivery of the balance needed by Lebanon. Mr. Raphael Lahoud, a prominent Lebanese *émigré* in South America, has returned there after a visit to Lebanon. He was accompanied by an official of the Lebanese Government with whom he hopes to negotiate a sale of between 70,000 and 100,000 tons of wheat from Argentina at a price of 30 piastres per kilog. Mr. Lahoud claims to be in good personal relations with President Perón.

16. The price index of local stock exchange securities remained steady, while the official index of wholesale prices showed a drop in May to 780 as compared with 783 in April. This was due to a drop in the prices of raw materials and manufactured goods, especially textiles, but the price of food-stuffs rose as compared with the April figures. Cost-of-living index figures for May showed an overall decrease of two points to 477 (1939 = 100) due to the

reduced prices of clothing, but the benefit thus derived was offset by the continued rise in food prices, which maintained the general index at about its previous level.

Currency.

17. The note circulation of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban amounted at the end of May to £328 million, a decrease of 2 million on the April figures. The decrease was caused by a reduction in the amount of currency in circulation in Syria, where a decrease of 5 million was recorded, while the amount in circulation increased by 3 million in Lebanon. The price of the gold sovereign fluctuated between 4,040 and 4,225 and was quoted at the latter figure on 30th June. It was learned from a confidential source that the amount of foreign currency held by the Office des Changes on 28th June was as follows:—

£ Sterling	...	1,150,000
£ Palestinian	...	100,000
£ Egyptian	...	39,000
Dinars (Iraq)	...	100,000
\$...	550,000

Holdings of other currencies were not specified.

18. The Australian Commission in the Middle East visited the Lebanon in the course of the month.

(c) Press

General Trend

Palestine.—The general tone of many papers was one of lack of confidence in the International Commission of Enquiry, and ultra-nationalist papers urged the Arabs to go on a general strike on the day fixed for its arrival in Palestine. Statements made by Arab leaders expressing Arab determination to save Palestine, cost what it may, were prominently reproduced; the Arabs were constantly reminded that they should alter their tactics in their struggle for Palestine if they mean to save that country as well as the other Arab States from the Zionist danger. They were also warned not to be deceived by the apparent tension which seems to exist between the Jewish organisations.

Egypt and the Sudan.—There was not much comment this month. A few articles appeared which try to refute the British point of view on the sterling debts, and to prove that it was Egypt who rendered valuable services to Britain during the war, and not *vice versa* as the British claim. There was much conjecture as to whether

Egypt would raise her case at U.N.O., or would reopen bilateral negotiations with Britain; but the impression was given that, in view of the tension which now exists between Russia and the Anglo-Saxons, Britain was inclined to be more lenient with Egypt on condition that the latter gave up the idea of going to U.N.O.

Transjordan.—King Abdullah's visit to Bagdad, the Transjordan military manoeuvres near the Syrian frontiers, and the contacts between the head of the Popular Party and official personages in Amman led the papers to believe that grave developments in the Arab East were forthcoming, and that the Greater Syria project was on the way to realisation. It is believed that the Greater Syria project was an important factor in determining the results of the Lebanese elections, and will be so with the coming Syrian elections.

Arab League.—Certain pro-French and pro-Russian papers called attention to the activities of Philby in India, who is paving the way for the formation of a pan-Islamic League which will include the Arab League as well; but certain nationalist papers warned the Arabs not to be misled by such rumours, and quoted the General Secretary of the Arab League as denying that Pakistan will ever be a member of the Arab League.

Russia.—Anti-Communist Armenian papers continue their campaign against communism and try to prove that life in the Soviet Union is unbearable. At the same time, however, the same papers criticise the Anglo-Saxons for trying to shield

Turkey, and for turning a deaf ear to the Armenian claims. Some Arabic papers note that Russia is getting more interested in the Palestine question and criticise her for facilitating Jewish emigration to Palestine. They are glad to note that she is beginning to feel the unsoundness of her international policy. One paper, at least, is glad that the Arab East seems to have finally decided to line up with the Anglo-Saxon, not the Soviet, front.

Internal

This month is characterised by the large number of cartoons which express opinion of the Solh Cabinet and particularly of Riad Solh himself. It is needless to say that this opinion was, with the exception of very few papers, invariably critical of the Premier's policy. Although a few of the nationalist papers have begun to strike a softer note, yet it cannot be said that the Opposition has weakened. The activities of the Press Syndicate and the League for National Liberation indicate that the Opposition is beginning to organise itself. Home Minister, Camille Chamoun, is criticised for persecuting the Popular Party, which he himself revived in 1943, and one paper cites an anecdote which gives the impression that the British are behind him. The bomb incidents are taken as an indication of the extent of popular indignation; but *Ash-Sharq*, the only Arabic paper which kept loyal to the Government all through, ascribes them to Zionist terrorists who have stealthily found their way to the Phalangists.

LEBANON: MONTHLY SUMMARY No. 12, JULY 1947

(A) Political

The outstanding event of the month has been the visit of U.N.S.C.O.P. (20th-24th July). Following an intimation by the Committee it would be prepared to visit any Arab capital for the purpose of hearing the Arab case, the Lebanese Government after consultation with the other Arab Governments issued an invitation to the committee to come to the Lebanon. All Arab Governments, with the exception of Transjordan, sent representatives; the Transjordan Government declined the invitation on the grounds that it was not a member of the United Nations Organisation, but arrangements were made for a number of the Committee to visit Amman after their stay in the Lebanon. The first meeting was held in public at the Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs on

22nd July, when Hamid Frangieh read a statement presenting the Arab case. This statement emphasised: (1) The right of the Arabs of Palestine to self-determination, and (2) the need for the maintenance of peace in the Middle East. On the following day the Arab delegates replied to written questions submitted by the committee at two secret meetings held at Sofar, and on 24th July the committee, including the chairman, left for a one-day visit to Amman and the remainder proceeded to Switzerland. Arrangements made for the Committee's reception were satisfactory (in fact they reflect considerable credit on the Lebanese Government), and on the whole the Arab case appears to have been well presented. A suggestion by the Committee that an Arab liaison

officer should, if it were considered necessary by the committee, be made available in Switzerland, was agreed to by the Arab delegates, and Camille Chamoun, the Minister of the Interior, who left for Europe on a private visit at the end of the month, is expected to proceed to Switzerland to contact the Committee.

2. Advantage was taken of the presence of Arab statesmen to discuss the Anglo-Egyptian dispute, and, in particular, to draw up instructions for despatch to the Syrian representative on the Security Council. Owing to the Arab League decision to support Egypt the delegates who, on the whole, appeared to appreciate the British position, found themselves in a serious dilemma, and it was only after several meetings that they succeeded in drafting the instructions. On 25th July it was agreed that the Syrian Government should instruct Fares Khoury on the following lines:—

- (1) The Arabs were bound to execute the decision of the Arab League.
- (2) His Majesty's Government considered that Syria was virtually a party to the dispute and there was danger that objection might be raised against Syria in the course of the meeting of the Security Council.
- (3) The Syrian representative should warn the Egyptians of the dangers involved. Failure might lead to grave consequences not only in Egypt but also in other Arab countries.
- (4) Egypt's national aspirations should be attained by conciliation lest Anglo-Egyptian tension should have repercussions on other Arab affairs.
- (5) Should the Security Council be inclined to recommend reopening of direct negotiations, the Syrian representative should encourage it.

3. In spite of preoccupation with foreign affairs, internal politics have received considerable attention. The Chamber met on 1st July when the report of the Validation Committee was debated. This report recommended the invalidation of the election of three candidates, Farid Khazen, Amin Nahleh (both of Mount Lebanon) and Mohammed Ghotaimy (South Lebanon). The debate was continued at a meeting of the Chamber on

28th July, when it was decided to reject the Committee's report. The Chamber unanimously accepted the validity of the election of Farid Khazen (who undoubtedly enjoys much popular support and whose election was objected to largely on technical grounds), but there was considerable opposition in connexion with the other two Deputies.

4. The extra parliamentary Opposition has continued its activities. Abdul Hamid Kerami and his newly-formed National Liberation Party addressed a public petition to the President of the Republic asking for the dissolution of the Chamber, the appointment of a neutral Government to hold new elections and the revision of the Constitution and the electoral law. A book describing in detail the irregularities of the elections has been published secretly by Emile Eddé's National Bloc Party, and it is believed that a considerable number of copies have been sent overseas. Eddé's supporters also sent a telegram to U.N.S.C.O.P. warning them that, in their view, the Lebanese Government was illegal and that therefore the country was not bound by any action taken by it in connexion with Palestine. In spite of these activities there is little doubt, however, that the tension caused by the elections has lessened considerably; it is significant that when Monseigneur Moubarak returned from his visit to Europe at the end of the month, the Opposition failed to take advantage of the occasion, and the meetings which marked the event were not particularly successful from their point of view. Furthermore, a lawyer's strike, which was organised in protest against the arrest of the Shia candidate alleged to have been responsible for the bomb incidents in June (see paragraph 1 of Summary No. 11), petered out, and the three-day press strike which occurred on the 3rd to 5th July was organised in connexion with the administrative suspension of newspapers and not on the election issue. It is known, however, that the Government are somewhat exercised by the prospect of a mass meeting which Abdul Hamid Kerami proposes to hold in Tripoli at the end of Ramadan.

5. Within the Chamber an anti-Government movement directed mainly against the Prime Minister (who, since the elections has undoubtedly lost a great deal of his popularity and who, in the Chamber, is at present far from strong) and Camille Chamoun, the Minister of the Interior, has become discernible. This movement is

being encouraged by Ahmed el Assad (South Lebanon) and by Sheikh Selim Khoury (brother of the President) whose hostility to Camille Chamoun remains unabated. These Deputies aim at securing a change of Government, but it appears that the Prime Minister has succeeded in persuading the President that this would be inopportune before the opening of the autumn session of the Chamber.

6. Attempts by the Minister of the Interior to effect administrative changes affecting the higher ranks of the Civil Service have been unsuccessful owing to the opposition of the President and members of the Cabinet under his influence. The main obstacle appears to be the position of Hussein Jisr (the Mouhafez of Mount Lebanon who was dismissed for his part in the irregularities which marked the recent elections); the President is determined to reinstate him, while the Minister of the Interior, who criticised him publicly at the time, is not unnaturally opposed to it. As a result, not only has the whole series of proposed administrative changes been virtually held up (the only appointment announced so far is that of Colonel Nouredin Rifai, the Mouhafez of North Lebanon, as Chief of the Gendarmerie) but meetings of the Cabinet have been postponed in order to avoid a serious split in the ranks of the Government. The administration has naturally suffered as a consequence.

7. Antoun Saadi, the leader of the Popular Party (P.P.S.), who is still in hiding, has dismissed from the party three of his principal lieutenants, including Nehme Tabet who, during the leader's wartime absence, was head of the party. Tabet, in whose name the party was recognised in 1944, has informed the authorities that he has no longer any connexion with it and the party is therefore considered virtually dissolved. He is now engaged in preparing for the formation of a new party with a "Lebanese" programme.

8. A further batch of 3,575 Armenian emigrants left Beirut for Soviet Armenia by the Russian ship *Pobeda* on 28th July. The vast majority of these Armenians came from Syria. Communists are reported to have been active in rural areas, particularly in the Bekaa and South Lebanon.

9. Two officers of the Lebanese army have been selected for a course of special training in the United Kingdom. Officers have also been selected for similar missions

in France and the United States of America.

10. The position of Lebanese emigrants in French West Africa (where it is alleged that they are the object of discrimination by the authorities) has received attention in the press and also in the Chamber.

11. The recent statement in the House of Commons on the "Greater Syria" project passed virtually unnoticed in the Lebanon.

12. The Mexican Minister, Dr. de Icaza, has presented his credentials.

13. The Indonesian Delegation visited Beirut towards the end of the month. According to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Lebanese Government will probably recognise the Indonesian Republic *de facto*.

(B) Economic

14. The Lebanese Government are not yet in sight of a solution to its difficult food problems. Hopes were raised by a report received during the month from the Lebanese Minister in Washington that an allocation of 25,000 tons of Canadian wheat had been made by the International Emergency Food Council but further investigation disclosed that the Lebanon would be entitled to no more than a claim on Canada's free exportable surplus. A consignment of 4,000 tons has, however, been ordered and there has been a consequent scarcity of official dollar exchange while the Government is marshalling its dollar resources to pay for this and other possible orders. Meanwhile no satisfactory arrangement has been made with Syria and the Lebanese allege that recent Syrian deliveries have been of poor quality. The Director-General of the Ministry of Agriculture made a tour of agricultural areas during the month and has reported that local crops this year will yield about 40 per cent. less than last year. Despite reassuring statements there is general fear that a serious shortage may develop and there are already signs that private individuals are trying to buy up stocks for the coming winter. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has stated in confidence that if a crisis develops he will lift all restrictions and thereby enable the Lebanon to share in Syria's contraband trade in cereals with neighbouring countries.

15. A Turkish air delegation, headed by the Secretary-General of the Turkish Air Ministry, visited Lebanon during the month to discuss the possibilities of establishing an air line between Turkey and Lebanon.

No agreement has yet been announced. A trial flight has been made for a new air service between Beirut and Bucharest with connexions to Budapest, Prague and Warsaw. This service, which is scheduled to begin in August and to operate thrice monthly, will, it is believed, be operated by a Soviet-Roumanian company using Russian-built D.C. 3s.

16. As a result of the Mexican ban on the export of gold pesos, this trade has now ceased and thus has released an amount of dollars on the free market which has resulted in a drop of 20 piastres in the price of the dollar. The urgency of reaching an agreement with the French on the currency situation is now fully realised and the Syrian and Lebanese Governments agreed that negotiations should take place in Paris during August. M. Busson is expected to arrive in Beirut shortly. The Lebanese have been urged by M. Van Zeeland, their economic adviser, to endeavour to conclude an early agreement. The Supreme Council of Common Interests has submitted to the Lebanese and Syrian Governments a statement claiming £L. 13,843,000 from the French Government arising out of the operation of the Common Interests under the French Mandate.

Note circulation in the Lebanon increased by the end of June to 140,000,000 compared with 138,500,000 in May.

17. The cost of living showed a slight decrease during June as compared with the previous month. This was due to a seasonal fall in the price of vegetables which have been plentiful but the main commodities, flour, bread and sugar continued to rise; this tendency has been maintained during July but published figures are not yet available.

18. On 7th July employees of the petrol and oil distributing companies went on strike thereby causing considerable inconvenience both to transport and to local users of oil fuel. Action was taken by the Government to procure and distribute supplies under armed escort while negotiations proceeded. Negotiations were at first conducted by the Ministry of the Interior, but later the companies were allowed to negotiate with their own employees and agreement was reached. The workers returned after approximately a week, having obtained—

- (1) wage increase of 12½ per cent. from 1st January, 1947;

- (2) grant of two weeks' paid holiday; and
- (3) recognition of public holidays with payment.

(C) Press

(General Trend)

Palestine

On the occasion of U.N.S.C.O.P.'s visit to the Lebanon, the commission was repeatedly reminded of the grim determination of the Arabs to reject any solution which conflicted with their demands. It was reminded also that the solution of the Indian problem cannot be taken as a precedent in the Palestine case. The majority of the papers do not believe that this eighteenth commission of enquiry would prove any better than its predecessors; nevertheless, its insistence on hearing the Arab point of view was taken as a good omen. Several papers commend the Arab delegates on the bold stand they took in their talks with U.N.S.C.O.P. One paper, however, feels that the Arab point of view was not forcibly expressed in the statement submitted to the commission by the Lebanese Foreign Minister; and the recognition of the land regulations now in force in Palestine is taken as a step backward in the Arab struggle.

Transjordan and Greater Syria

The results of the Syrian elections, the arrest of Syrian personages on the charge of working for a foreign State, the disturbances in Jebel Druze and the activities of Amman, have been taken as an indication that the Greater Syria project is on the way to realisation. One paper, however, believes that it is a dream which allures only the rulers of Amman, and that the British have no hand in it. The Anglo-Transjordan Treaty is regarded as the most difficult obstacle in the way of the project. Once this is removed, it will not be difficult for Syria and Transjordan to come to an understanding. In short, the majority of the papers are suspicious of the real intentions of Amman.

Arab League

The appointment of Brigadier Clayton as Liaison Officer between the British Government and the Arab League aroused the indignation of the pro-French press on the grounds that it means the recognition of the League as a diplomatic entity. One

paper, however, tries to relieve their anxiety by reminding them that the independence of the Arab States is not so ephemeral as to be shaken by such a trivial event as the transfer of a British official from one British department to another.

Egypt and the Sudan

The general tone of the Arabic papers is in support of the Egyptian demands. One or two papers make disparaging remarks about the British attitude towards the Egyptian question, and try to put in relief the weak points of the Condominium. One French paper advises the Lebanon to take an "attitude équivoque." Several papers, however, published the British point of view on the Anglo-Egyptian dispute.

Russia

There is very little comment in Arabic papers. One Nationalist paper attacks the Iraqi Government for the drastic measures it has taken against Communists in order to please Britain. Anti-Communist Armenian papers seize every opportunity to discredit the Communist régime. They admit that Britain has won a Pyrrhic victory; but they believe that she will soon

recover her position as Supreme Arbiter of international disputes.

Internal

It cannot be said that the wave of opposition has subsided. There is a tendency to organise it on a more solid basis. The heterogeneous elements in the opposition front are taken by pro-Government papers as a sign of weakness; but the appearance of the League for National Liberation on the side of the Opposition has come as a valuable reinforcement, although its co-operation with the Eddé group is difficult to explain. In general Nationalist papers, whether pro-Government or of the Opposition, condemn Eddé as a traitor. The Opposition found in the Syrian elections a fresh weapon with which to attack the Lebanese Government. A vivid contrast was drawn between the neutral attitude of the Syrian Government and the biased attitude of the Lebanese. The papers were not agreed as to whether the results of the Syrian elections could be regarded as an asset or a liability to the Greater Syria project. The Lebanese President was repeatedly urged to use his right to dissolve Parliament and save the situation. All but three of the Arabic papers boycotted the Lebanese Chamber.

dent visited the Lebanese President at the latter's summer palace at Beit Eddine, when it is believed that the Syrians finally agreed to come to terms with the American company. The agreement was eventually signed in Damascus on 1st September.

2. King Abdullah's manifesto of 4th August on the Greater Syria project has been strongly criticised in the Lebanese press. The question was also examined at the meeting of the two Presidents at Beit Eddine (where the Lebanese and Syrian Prime Ministers and the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs were present), and a communiqué which was published after the meeting expressed "astonishment and surprise at the manifesto, which constituted interference in the affairs of the Lebanese and Syrian Republics, an attack on the régimes of the two countries and, finally, a violation of the Charter League and of international law." The Minister for

Foreign Affairs informed His Majesty's Minister on 29th August that if there were no improvement, the Lebanese Government might recall their chargé d'affaires or even break off diplomatic relations with Transjordan. The question might be raised in the Arab League, which would be called upon to decide whether the Levant States should secede if Transjordan be expelled. It is not probable that the Lebanese were able to take advantage of the alarm of the Syrian Government on the question of Greater Syria to induce them to come to terms with the Trans-Arabian Pipe-line Company.

3. The success of the Lebanese Government in connexion with the pipe-line has considerably strengthened their hand, and it has probably had some effect on their handling of the internal political situation. Attacks on the President led to the suspension of a number of newspapers during the early part of the month, and on 21st August the French language paper *Orient* (which on the previous day had published a laudatory editorial on the subject of Eddé) and the Phalangist organ *Al-Amal* were also suspended. The Government further decided to forbid a public meeting which the National Liberation Party of Abdul Hamid Kerami proposed to hold at Sofar on 24th August. The Government feared that if the meeting were held, incidents might occur—there is no doubt that Kerami's supporters include a number of highly irresponsible elements. Elaborate precautions were taken, units of the army were used to reinforce the police and gendarmerie, and for a period of twenty-four hours Sofar was virtually in a state of siege. Kerami and a number of his closest supporters attempted a dramatic procession to the place of meeting but were unsuccessful, and they had to be content with a small reunion in Kerami's house. No incidents occurred. The Government's success impressed the public, but the effect was less than might have been expected as a result of the exaggerated measures taken by the Government. The Opposition naturally gained considerable publicity.

4. It is known that the Government continue to be much exercised by the prospect of a further Opposition meeting, which, in spite of the Government's interdiction, Kerami appears determined to hold at Tripoli on 14th September. The danger of serious incidents occurring in Tripoli, should the meeting take place, is con-

siderable and it is possible that the exaggerated show of force, in which the Government indulged at Sofar, was intended to intimidate the Opposition party.

5. The events at Sofar were quickly followed by the publication of a manifesto by Mgr. Moubarak, the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut, who had been prevented from attending the meeting. It was in the most violent terms and called for civil disobedience and insubordination by the police and army. The Government seriously considered his arrest. Negotiations with the Patriarch ensued and the Papal Nuncio was invited to use his influence in the appropriate quarters. The Patriarch finally addressed a letter to the Maronite Deputies, dissociating himself from Mgr. Moubarak and ordered the archbishop to leave his diocese and to proceed to the Patriarch's summer residence. Mgr. Moubarak complied with the order, but rather unexpectedly returned to his diocese almost immediately.

6. Early in the month a number of Deputies, led by Philippe Takla, pressed the Government to call an extraordinary session of the Chamber. The movement, which was in all probability directed against Camille Chamoun, was unsuccessful.

7. Some progress has been made by the Government in connexion with administrative appointments. The Emir Khalil Chehab (who during the elections had been promised a diplomatic post in return for standing down in favour of Riad Solh in South Lebanon) has been appointed the Mohafez of North Lebanon, with the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary, 1st class. He is an ex-President of the Chamber and an ex-Prime Minister, and his acceptance of the post represents a success for the Government.

8. Fares El Khoury's speech in support of Egypt at the Security Council, though it has been acclaimed in the press, has apparently caused pained surprise in responsible circles. The Minister for Foreign Affairs informed His Majesty's Minister on 29th August that the Syrian President, who had learned of Fares's speech on the eve of his departure from Damascus for Beit Eddin, had been deeply shocked at his delegate's behaviour and had immediately telegraphed asking for explanations. The Minister for Foreign Affairs added that the question of his recall had been mooted. The President of the Republic confirmed this to His Majesty's

(A) Political

Public interest has chiefly centred on the negotiations between the Syrian Government and the Trans-Arabian Pipe Line Company and on the efforts made by the Lebanese Government to ensure agreement between the parties. The intransigence of the Syrians which led the company to suspend the recruitment of local labour in Beirut caused great bitterness here. In Government circles there was evidently a determination to go to considerable lengths to secure the establishment of the pipe-line terminal and refinery on the Lebanese littoral. The Prime Minister visited Damascus on several occasions in connexion with the negotiations but it was not until 20th August that progress appears to have been made. On his return to Beirut on that date, the Prime Minister seemed to be confident of the outcome, and on 27th August the Syrian Presi-

Minister on the following day and, in response to a hint from His Majesty's Minister, telephoned to the Syrian President suggesting that the matter should be further considered without delay. His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires (His Majesty's Minister having left for leave of absence in the United Kingdom) later informed the President of the unfavourable impression caused in London by the Syrian delegate's speech, which had led His Majesty's Government to doubt the good intentions of the Syrian Government, and gave him the gist of the instructions sent to His Majesty's Minister at Damascus to urge the Syrian Government to send categorical instructions to Fares el Khoury. The President undertook to do his utmost to ensure that the Syrian Government acted accordingly.

9. The Russian steamer *Pobeda* left Beirut on 11th August with 3,900 Armenian emigrants on board.

10. Two officers of the Lebanese Sureté and the head of the Police Judiciaire (Emir Farid Chehab) and one of his assistants are shortly to leave for the United Kingdom to attend a course in criminal detection.

(B) Economic

12. Apart from experts and technicians it is estimated that the construction of the American pipe-line and the refinery will provide employment for about 15,000 persons. Syria and Lebanon will also benefit by the large dollar expenditure.

13. The International Monetary Fund has now accepted the official rate of exchange of the Syrian and Lebanese pound and the Lebanon is sending a delegate to the conference to be held in London on 11th September. The Banque de Syrie et du Liban has been instructed to transfer £Leb.10 million as the Lebanese contribution to I.M.F. funds. A representative of the American Treasury visited the Lebanon during the month and criticised the present Lebanese monetary policy, which has allowed a considerable free market in foreign exchange and speculative dealings in gold.

14. The French Government have paid the sum of 16,600,000 fr. due to Syria and the Lebanon to maintain the value of the currency cover in terms of sterling against the last devaluation of the franc. At the same time the French Government have made it clear that the currency cover will not be guaranteed against any subsequent

devaluation. The Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs is expected to go to France during September in order to represent his Government at talks to be held between the French, Lebanese and Syrian Governments regarding future currency problems.

15. It is reported that the French Government have allocated 5½ million dollars to the two countries for the third quarter of the current year. In the case of the Lebanon the whole of this sum has been ear-marked for the import of cereals, and is not available to importers in need of foreign exchange.

16. The note circulation in Syria and Lebanon at the end of July increased to £Leb.328½ million against £Leb.325 million at the end of June.

17. The Lebanese share in the Customs and Excise revenue of the Supreme Council of Common Interests during 1946 was £Leb.8,922,000.

18. The Lebanese Government have succeeded in securing 4,000 tons of Canadian flour and 5,000 tons of American flour, but shortage of dollars prevents them from purchasing large quantities of grain from the Western hemisphere. The attempt to obtain 70,000 tons of wheat from the Argentine has proved unsuccessful in view of the high price of £58 per ton, which the Lebanese Government is unable to pay, and there is consequently a wide gap between their requirements and the supplies at present available. This is due to the poor local crop and to the fact that Syria, which provided 115,000 tons of cereals from last year's crop, will, the Lebanese believe, be able to supply no more than 10,000 tons from her 1947 crop.

19. The Minister of National Economy has estimated that the current crop of olives will produce approximately 4,000 tons of oil. The crop of oranges is estimated at 50,000 tons and that of lemons 20,000 tons. This is twice the amount produced in 1946. A sum of £Leb.20,000 has been voted by the Government for the establishment of a fruit-growers marketing association.

20. Cost-of-living figures published for July by the Statistics Department of the Ministry of National Economy show no change from the previous month, when the figure was 487 (July-August 1939=100). The figures prepared by the Shell Oil Company of Syria for their European employees, show a decrease from 580 to 576.4 accounted for by a drop in the price of food-stuffs such as cereals, bread and sugar.

21. On 30th August the Ministry of National Economy issued a decree prohibiting the import of goods purchased with free market exchange unless the importer is able to satisfy the Exchange Control Office that the exchange used is not liable to be handed over to office, *i.e.*, exchange acquired prior to 16th March, 1946. Furthermore, import licences will not now be granted unless the goods are considered to be essentials. This decree has not yet been put into effect.

22. During the month a Yugoslav Trade Mission visited the Lebanon under the leadership of M. Sukarov of the Yugoslav Ministry of Commerce. It discussed the exchange of Lebanese tobacco and olive oil for sugar from Yugoslavia. No definite agreement was, however, reached.

23. Professor W. A. Robson, of London University, arrived at the end of the month to advise the Lebanese Government on the preparation of a social insurance scheme. He is being assisted by Dr. Murray, Statistical Adviser to the British Middle East Office. Mr. V. K. Maitland, Forestry Adviser to British Middle East Office, also visited Lebanon at the end of the month to survey the Government's afforestation schemes in company with the local Director of Forest Services.

24. A new air service was scheduled to begin on 27th August between Beirut and Moscow via Bucharest, Prague, Budapest and Warsaw. It is believed to be run by the Soviet Roumanian Airlines Company, and will operate approximately every twelve days.

(C) Press

Palestine

25. Attention is repeatedly called in the papers to the determination of the Arabs to oppose by force of arms if necessary any solution which does not satisfy their demands, and to the vivid contrast between the mean behaviour of the Jewish terrorists and the noble behaviour of the Arab insurgents during the Arab revolt. Britain is held responsible for the abnormal situation in Palestine; but it is noted that Britain and even America are beginning to realise that the Jews are a race which cannot co-operate with any other human race, and should be dealt with on that basis. However, the papers did not cherish the hope that U.N.S.C.O.P. would do them justice. Britain was warned not to take the solution of the Indian question as a precedent.

Egypt and The Sudan

26. The press was practically unanimous in its support of the Egyptian demands. Nokrashi Pasha and Fares Bey el-Khoury were highly complimented on their bold defence of the Egyptian cause, and Mr. Cadogan's arguments were critically scrutinised and refuted. Stress was laid on two main points: (a) Egypt signed the 1936 treaty under coercion, and (b) the overwhelming majority of the Sudanese desire union with Egypt. Pro-French papers reminded Britain of the inconsistency between her attitude towards the stationing of French forces in Syria and the Lebanon, and her attitude towards the stationing of British forces in the Nile Valley.

Transjordan and Greater Syria

27. There was a violent and unanimous press reaction to King Abdullah's appeal for unification, coupled with a strong affirmation that Syria and the Lebanon, with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen behind them, are determined to oppose King Abdullah's project. Several papers hinted openly or covertly at a British hand directing King Abdullah's manoeuvres, and one French paper described Transjordan as nothing else but a British military barracks, and the kingship of King Abdullah as a mere fiction. It was regretted that the Transjordan Monarch raised this question at a time when the solidarity of the Arab front was most vital for the success of the Arab cause in Egypt and Palestine and His Majesty is accused of working to disrupt the Arab League in order to serve British imperial designs. One paper insists on a clear and unequivocal answer by Britain to the question: "Will Britain give military help to Transjordan in the event of an arms clash over the Greater Syria project as the Anglo-Transjordan Treaty stipulates?"

Russia

28. Armenian anti-Communist papers continue their campaign against the Soviet régime, and a few Arabic papers reproduce articles which discredit Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe. A few Arabic papers hinted at a pro-Russian orientation in Egypt's foreign policy as a result of the doubtful attitude the Security Council is taking towards the Anglo-Egyptian dispute.

Internal

29. Two things were most outstanding: the Tapline agreement and the Opposition

movement. Pro-French papers vehemently attack Syria for the stubborn stand she took towards Tapline, and persisted in demanding that the economic partnership with Syria should be liquidated. A few papers traced Syria's stubbornness to foreign influences, and one paper explicitly accused the British of being the cause. Another paper strongly retaliated and reminded the accuser that during the war both Germany and Japan tried to drive a wedge between British and America, but

failed. Nationalist papers highly commended Syria on her firm stand.

The press reaction to the opposition movement may be described as critical of the Government and in support of the Opposition. Certain Nationalist papers tilted at the head of the Opposition for including among his group elements with a suspicious past. One paper, definitely pro-Government, traced the struggle between the Government and the Opposition to rivalry for the Presidency of the Republic.

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No. 26

LEBANON: MONTHLY SUMMARY No. 14, SEPTEMBER 1947

(A) Political

During the course of the month there has been a marked improvement in the internal political situation. The strong line taken by the Government in connexion with the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition meeting at Sofar on 24th August undoubtedly impressed the Opposition leaders and following negotiations between Abdel Hamid Kerameh and the Government (in which Kamal Jumblatt, Henri Pharaon and the resuscitated National Conference played an important part) a compromise was reached whereby the Opposition meeting held in Tripoli on 14th September was limited in size and private in character. As a result the meeting passed off without incident. At the same time a rift occurred between the National Liberation Party of Kerameh and the National *bloc* of Emile Eddé. A further blow was dealt to the Opposition by the publication on 27th September of a letter addressed by Mgr. Moubarak, the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut, to U.N.S.C.O.P. in which he advocated the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine and a Christian National Home in the Lebanon. There is little doubt that the publication of this letter was engineered by the Government to discredit Mgr. Moubarak, and the Maronite Patriarch, the Maronite Deputies and the Chamber were quickly mobilised to condemn the Archbishop's action. These tactics were dangerous (the risk of a serious communal clash was considerable) but the Government were completely successful and with their blessing a general strike in protest was also organised in Beirut in 29th September. There is some evidence that, having broken the Opposition ranks, the President is now attempting to win over some of the better

elements and to press forward with reforms. A meeting between Abdul Hamid Kerameh and the President is expected to take place soon. As regards the Parliamentary Opposition, Ahmed al Assad has been pacified by all allocation of funds for much-needed public works in South Lebanon and his rival, Adel Osseiran, has been weaned away from the Opposition by his appointment as Lebanese delegate to the United Nations Assembly convened to examine the Palestine question. Relations between Camille Chamoun and the President, however, have deteriorated. The President was particularly indignant that in spite of Mgr. Moubarak's seditious manifesto, reported in paragraph 5 of last month's summary, Camille Chamoun, on his return from the United Kingdom, saw fit to call on the Archbishop, and it is believed that the President tried, but without success, to induce the Prime Minister to reshuffle his Cabinet in the absence of Camille Chamoun (who is leading the Lebanese delegation to U.N.O.) and to exclude him. Riad Bey Solh is himself beginning to feel uneasy. Having regained much of the popularity which he lost after the elections of May, he now fears that the President may use his influence in the Chamber to secure the downfall of his Government before he (Riad) gets too strong. Relations between Henri Pharaon and the President continue to be strained.

2. The Chamber of Deputies met in extraordinary session on 25th September. The second sitting on 29th September was wholly devoted to an attack on Mgr. Moubarak in connexion with his letter to U.N.S.C.O.P. referred to above. On 30th September a beginning was made with

the consideration of the important Municipalities Law. Under the terms of the new law, members of municipal bodies will be elected unimally and the project is interesting as constituting a first step in the modification of the present Electoral Law based on the communal list system. If it is passed, it will also make possible a measure of decentralisation.

3. In the field of foreign affairs attention has centred on the Palestine question. The reaction in the Lebanon to the U.N.S.C.O.P. recommendations was universally unfavourable. On 16th September the Political Committee of the Arab League met to consider the situation. The meetings were marked by a sharp clash between the Iraqi and Saudi Arabian representatives over the application of the Bludan secret decisions and in particular the implementation of the economic boycott of Great Britain and the United States. There is little doubt that the aim of the Iraqi Prime Minister was to demonstrate that Saudi Arabia was not prepared to apply economic sanctions, or in the unlikely event of her doing so, to bring about the collapse of the Saudi Kingdom which he believes cannot carry on without American dollars. Agreement on other points was only reached after a decision to postpone consideration of economic sanctions until the next meeting of the Arab League Council. These decisions of the committee included (1) rejection of the U.N.S.C.O.P. recommendations, (2) assistance to the Arabs of Palestine in the form of money, arms and men, (3) the despatch of notes to His Majesty's Government and the United States Government, (4) the appointment of a Technical Committee to co-ordinate Arab assistance to Palestine. A communiqué published on 19th September emphasised that in the event of the U.N.S.C.O.P. recommendations being implemented, the Arab Governments would be unable to restrain popular enthusiasm, an attitude which was justified by the fact that certain other Governments (a reference to the United States Government) were similarly unable to restrain certain organisations from furnishing aid to the Zionists. In accordance with the decision of the committee, a note was handed to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires by the Lebanese Prime Minister on 25th September. A similar note was also handed to the United States Minister.

4. Reaction in the Lebanon to the Colonial Secretary's statement on Palestine

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of 26th September was less marked owing to the publication of Mgr. Moubarak's letter to U.N.S.C.O.P. which for several days monopolised public opinion. Nevertheless, Moslem generally welcomed His Majesty's Government's decision, although some were somewhat sceptical. But even those who expressed doubts as regards the real intentions of His Majesty's Government expressed satisfaction at the statement which they regarded as a step in the right direction. There has also been a tendency to argue that His Majesty's Government cannot in fairness divest themselves of responsibility for the situation in Palestine. In Christian circles there is considerable anxiety at the prospect of a possible British withdrawal from Palestine.

5. The Minister for Foreign Affairs left for France on 6th September to take part in Franco-Syrian Lebanese financial negotiations which are due to begin in Paris at the end of the month. The French Legation, on 31st August, addressed a note to the Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the effect that as France had discharged her obligation to maintain the franc cover for Syrian-Lebanese currency, the financial agreement of January 1944 had lapsed. The Lebanese replied disputing the right of the French to cancel the agreement unilaterally and proposed that the matter was one for negotiation. According to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the agenda for the meeting includes consideration of the rights of French companies in the Lebanon, and it is probable that the question of S.E.R.I.A.C. will be discussed.

6. The first Arab Cultural Conference was held in the Lebanon under the auspices of the Cultural Committee of the Arab League early in the month. The conference considered the report of the Arab League Cultural Committee on the policy of collaboration in the educational field agreed to in the Arab Cultural Convention. Certain differences of opinion between the Lebanese delegation and the extremists among the other Arab delegates soon became apparent. It is noteworthy that the Lebanese succeeded in moderating to some extent the pan-Arab tendencies of the latter, *e.g.*, in the teaching of history and geography, emphasis is laid first on the particular Arab country concerned, and, secondly, on the other Arab countries.

7. On 6th September the Russian vessel *s.s. Popeda*, left Beirut with 1,800 Lebanese and 200 Syrian Armenian emigrants.

(B) Economic

8. On 10th September the Lebanese Government published a decree forbidding all imports financed with foreign exchange purchased on the free market, except where the exchange had been acquired prior to 17th March, 1946, and further prohibiting the grant of import licences for all types of goods considered unnecessary for the needs of the country. This decree aroused strong opposition in local commercial circles and it is now doubtful whether it will be enforced. Meetings were held during the month between the Lebanese and Syrian authorities, but no agreement was reached on the compilation of an approved import list.

9. The Government and the general public are still concerned about the cereals situation during the coming winter and all Government holdings of dollars and sterling have been blocked to allow for the official purchases which the Government is trying to negotiate in the western hemisphere and in Australia. An application for assistance has been made to the Soviet Government and is being pursued by the Lebanese Minister in Moscow. In order to ease the situation meanwhile a decree has been published allowing the import of wheat and flour on private account without import licence.

10. Professor Robson, of London University, assisted by Dr. Murray, Statistical Adviser to B.M.E.O., Cairo, completed his preliminary investigations on behalf of the Lebanese Government regarding the establishment of a social insurance scheme in Lebanon. Mr. V. K. Maitland, Forestry Adviser to B.M.E.O., conducted a survey of Lebanon during the month and submitted to the Government a report describing the present state of afforestation and giving detailed recommendations for future policy.

11. Preliminary work has begun on the new civil airport at Khaldé near Beirut. The Lebanese Ministry of Public Works have obtained from the Trans-Arabian Pipe-line Company the use of equipment and the services of technicians to assist in the levelling of the ground. The final plans and layout have still not been approved.

12. Government cost-of-living index for August showed an increase of three points over the previous month. The figure for August was 490 (July-August 1939 = 100) and the increase was attributed to a rise in the price of food-stuffs, especially sugar and cooking fat. The leading commercial

journal, *Le Commerce du Levant*, has published an article disputing the official figures and asserting that from an analysis of the prices of six staple food commodities the cost-of-living index figure should be 640. The expected influx of American employees of the Trans-Arabian Pipe-line Company has led to an increase in rents in the residential quarters of Beirut and to a large increase in the wages asked by domestic labour. The high wages offered by the company have had the effect of attracting numbers of workers from other employment, including Government departments and it is reported that the Ministry of Public Works has opened discussions with the company in order that the latter may adopt wage scales more in accordance with local standards.

13. A convention was signed on 23rd August between the Lebanese Government and the Compagnie Française des Pétroles giving the latter the right to erect and operate oil refineries in the Lebanon for a period of seventy years.

14. The amount of currency in circulation in the Lebanon at the end of August was 148 million Lebanese or Syrian pounds, an increase of 4½ million over the previous month. This figure had increased to 149 million by 15th September. The backing for this issue was constituted as follows:—

	£L.
Gold, &c., cover ...	3,706,607
Franc cover ...	143,662,514
Loans to Government ...	1,630,879
Total ...	149,000,000

15. A civil air agreement has been signed between Lebanon and Turkey.

(C) Press*Palestine*

16. The general reaction to U.N.S.C.O.P.'s recommendations was one of utter resentment. Nationalist and Communist papers were most vehement and threatening in their comments. Stress was repeatedly laid on the grim determination of the Arabs all over the Arab East to take up arms, if necessary, in defence of Palestine, and time and again the Arabs were reminded that protests and memoranda were futile, and that quick action was necessary if Palestine were to be saved. A few papers, however, believe that a clash between Arabs and Jews may not be in Arab interests. The general reaction to Mr.

Creech Jones's statement may be described as satisfactory, although one paper in particular was extremely pessimistic and warned the Arabs that this move on the part of Britain was a political feint.

Egypt and the Sudan

17. Here again the general reaction was in sympathy with the Egyptian cause, and critical of British policy. One ultra-nationalist paper was most articulate in its attack on British policy in the Nile Valley. Communist papers, though possibly for different motives, shared the nationalist papers' point of view; but they expressed their fear that Nokrashi Pasha's visit to America was with the object of substituting America for British occupation of Egypt.

Transjordan and Greater Syria

18. Despite official statements made on behalf of the British Government that the latter had nothing to do with the Greater Syria project, most of the papers clung to their belief that King Abdullah's activities were inspired by the British. One paper reminded King Abdullah of the tragic fate of his father, despite the strong friendship which seemed to exist between him and the British. Another paper, on the other hand, definitely pro-British, tried to prove that the British mean what they say, and that their attitude towards the Greater Syria plan is a neutral attitude.

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No. 27

LEBANON: MONTHLY SUMMARY No. 15, OCTOBER 1947**(A) Political**

During the month of October interest has centred almost exclusively on the Palestine question. On 3rd October, in response to an invitation by the Arab Higher Committee, a strike was organised in protest against the recommendations of U.N.S.C.O.P. and the town of Beirut was almost completely closed, although no demonstrations took place. Owing to the cholera outbreak in Egypt the Arab League Council met in Beirut on 7th October. The Egyptian, Iraqi, Transjordanian and Syrian Prime Ministers were present, and Saudi Arabia was represented by Sheikh Yussef Yassin. At the inaugural meeting the chairman, Riad Bey Solh, said that the council was called upon to consider two vital questions

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Russia

19. Communist papers made much of Russia's support of Arab questions at U.N.O., but nationalist papers were, on the whole, suspicious that this support was not for purely altruistic motives. The anti-Soviet campaign in Armenian anti-Communist papers continues unabated.

Internal

20. Most of the internal commentary centred around M. Moubarak's activities, which were inaugurated by his appeal to the people to boycott the Government, and ended by the publication of his memorandum to U.N.S.C.O.P. in which he advocates a Christian National Home in a Small Lebanon side by side with a Zionist National Home in a partitioned Palestine. The press reaction was extremely critical of His Eminence's policy, reaching its highest pitch in nationalist and Communist papers. There was allusion to British fingers behind M. Moubarak's activities on the grounds that his Eminence's policy was in perfect conformity with the British-Zionist campaign for a Greater Syria.

Parallel with the campaign against M. Moubarak ran another campaign against the economic policy of the Government and its failure to control prices, especially the prices of food-stuffs, and to distribute the wheat and flour rations in due season. Moreover, there was much complaint about the quality of the flour distributed.

—Palestine and Egypt—but it is noteworthy that almost the whole of the session was devoted to the first problem.

2. The ex-Mufti of Jerusalem arrived in Beirut on 8th October. According to the Lebanese, his arrival came as a complete surprise to them. His Majesty's chargé d'affaires informed the Lebanese Prime Minister that his coming to Beirut would undoubtedly create an unfavourable impression in London, and later, on instructions, said that His Majesty's Government counted on the Lebanese Government to restrain the ex-Mufti from any activities which might increase the difficulties of the Palestine Government. The Lebanese Prime Minister readily gave this assurance. The position as regards the ex-Mufti was

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explained in a reply to a parliamentary question in the House of Commons on 27th October. The reply passed almost unnoticed in the Lebanese press, but the Prime Minister later informed His Majesty's chargé d'affaires that considerable efforts on his part had been necessary to achieve this result.

3. The Arab League Council lost no time in reaching impressive decisions regarding Palestine which were published in a communiqué on 9th October. These decisions were: (1) that the secret Bludan decisions would be applied if any solution affecting the right of Palestine to become an independent State was adopted; (2) in view of the British evacuation and the presence of Zionist forces in Palestine, it was recommended that the Arab States should take precautionary military measures on the frontiers of Palestine and that limitrophe States should facilitate participation in these measures by non-limitrophe States; (3) financial and other assistance should be made available to the Arabs of Palestine and a fund under the control of a Special Committee should be established. All sources agree that the delegates unanimously decided that no military intervention should take place as long as the British forces remained in Palestine and Arab leaders were at pains to explain that the military measures taken were precautionary and aimed at raising the morale of the Arabs, and preparing the way for filling the vacuum in Palestine when British forces withdrew. The Lebanese President gave His Majesty's chargé d'affaires an assurance that the measures taken by the Lebanese were not directed against the British.

4. The Secretary-General of the Arab League, accompanied by the Iraqi and Transjordanian Prime Ministers, visited Amman on 10th October in order, it is believed, to secure King Abdullah's agreement to the measures taken and to secure an invitation to the delegations to visit Amman on 13th October. The council adjourned on 16th October after a final meeting in which the questions of Libya and Egypt were examined. According to a communiqué which was issued after the meeting, it was decided to resist any proposal for tutelage or partition in Libya and to recommend to the Arab Governments to take diplomatic action in this sense. As regards Egypt, an assurance of continued support for Egyptian demands was given. In his final speech, the chairman, Riad

Solh, announced that the council would be recalled should circumstances make this necessary.

5. The principal results of the council's meetings may be summarised as follows: (1) a large measure of unity among the Arab Governments was achieved; (2) the Greater Syria question appears to have been relegated to the background; (3) the Arab League advocating intervention by organised armed forces scored a victory over the old school, *i.e.*, the ex-Mufti and his supporters, who continued to think of the Palestine question in terms of guerrillas; (4) the prestige of Iraq and the Transjordan increased considerably as it was realised that the main burden of effective intervention in Palestine would fall on them; (5) the morale of the Arabs was considerably higher as a result of the meeting; (6) during the meeting of the Political Committee of the Arab League in September, the emphasis had been largely on economic sanctions. During the council's meetings economic sanctions became only of secondary importance; (7) finally, full account appears to have been taken by the council of the policy of His Majesty's Government as explained in the Colonial Secretary's statement. Subsidiary results which are worthy of note are that Riad Bey's handling of the meetings served to increase his own personal prestige and that of the Lebanon; and the presence of Azzam Pasha lessened considerably Lebanese suspicions of the Secretary-General personally, though his functions continued to cause concern.

6. Public reaction to American and Russian support for the partition of Palestine was most unfavourable, especially among the Moslems. It is noteworthy that Lebanese Christians, who were undoubtedly somewhat alarmed by the bellicose decisions reached by the Arab League Council, were less vocal in their condemnation of American and Russian policy. There is no doubt, however, that local Communists have received a setback as a result of the Russian attitude. Arab leaders generally, however, were much discouraged and the improvement in their morale registered after the Arab League Council meetings was not maintained.

7. In internal politics the work of rapprochement between the extra-parliamentary opposition and the Government (in particular the President) has continued. The meeting between Abdul Hamid Karameh and the President, however, has

not yet taken place and the Committee of National Liberation (Karameh's party) issued a manifesto emphasising their determination to work for the dissolution of the Chamber. In the administrative field the Government has been faced with considerable difficulties, *e.g.*, the cereals situation, finance and the budgetary position, and at one stage there were indications that a change of Government was imminent. Hussein Awaini, the Beirut Deputy, was freely mentioned as Riad Bey Solh's successor. Following a Cabinet meeting on 27th October, however, when it was decided to effect cuts in expenditure and to set up a committee of three to consider a reduction in the number of civil servants, some improvement was noticeable.

8. The Ordinary Session of the Lebanese Chamber opened on 21st October when Sabri Bey Hamadi was re-elected as President. The Municipalities Law has now been voted article by article and will shortly be submitted to the Chamber as a whole. The draft Electoral Law has, however, been rejected by the Judicial Committee—as expected, it was opposed both by the quasi-feudal local chiefs and also by electorally weak Deputies whose election was due to the "lists system" and the support of local notables—but it is probable that the Government will insist on the draft being debated by the Chamber.

9. Following the outbreak of cholera in Egypt, severe restrictions on travel have been imposed and direct and indirect communications with Egypt by land and air have been cut by order of the Lebanese Government. Quarantine arrangements for passengers arriving by sea have been made and anti-cholera inoculation on a large scale has been provided for.

10. Agreement appears to have been reached in principle on the United States-Lebanese Commercial and Cultural Treaty. It will be recalled that insistence by the Lebanese on the right to accord preferential treatment to members of the Arab League had stood in the way of its conclusion earlier in the year—see paragraph 8 of Beirut Political Summary No. 4. According to the United States Minister the Americans have now pointed out that they are already entitled to "most favoured nation" treatment under the exchange of letters of 1924, and the Lebanese have agreed, subject to reciprocal treatment. It is understood that the final approval of the draft by the State Department is now awaited.

11. Mgr. Sayegh, Greek Catholic Archbishop of Beirut, has been elected Patriarch in succession to the late Mgr. Maghabghab.

12. Mgr. Karam, Greek Orthodox Bishop of Mount Lebanon, has left for Moscow to attend religious ceremonies there.

13. The return from Istanbul of the remains of the Lebanese Prince, the Emir Bashir (who died there in 1850) was the occasion for impressive ceremonies. The remains were interred at his palace of Beit Eddine which has recently been renovated.

(B) Economic

14. During the month the bread rationing system threatened to break down on account of shortage of supplies. Demonstrations occurred in several provincial centres, and a meeting was held between representatives of the Lebanese and Syrian Governments on 17th October as a result of which Syria agreed to lend 3,000 tons of wheat and 2,000 tons of barley in order to maintain minimum necessary supplies. In addition, the Government succeeded in requisitioning approximately 3,000 tons of cereals in the hands of private dealers. There was, however, widespread press criticism of the Government, and in order to allay public apprehension, the Minister of National Economy issued an official statement on 23rd October to the effect that supplies (in stock or from orders) were assured until the end of February.

15. Negotiations were continued in Paris between representatives of the French, Lebanese and Syrian Governments on the question of the future of the local currency, the backing for which is at present guaranteed in francs by the French Treasury. No official statement has been issued, but unofficial reports all state that no agreement has been reached due to French insistence on payment of £Syr. 200 million as a contribution to the upkeep of local levies during the war. Meanwhile, the termination of the allocations of hard currency formerly made by the French to Lebanon and Syria and the fear that any devaluation of the franc will inevitably involve the local currency, have induced a noticeable lack of confidence in the local money market.

16. On 16th October the Minister of Finance discussed the present financial situation at a press conference. He stated that the Government's holdings of hard currencies were virtually exhausted (although in fact the Government hold approximately £600,000) and that actual expenditure during the current financial

year had exceeded the budgetary estimate by £Leb. 18 millions. In addition, the reserve fund of the Government which had comprised £Leb. 20 millions was now reduced to £Leb. 10 millions, chiefly due to expenditure by the Ministry of Public Works. Later official statements have prepared public opinion for a substantial budget deficit at the end of the financial year and the Minister of Finance has added that if present food subsidies are to be maintained the public must face an increase in direct taxation or the imposition of indirect taxation from new sources.

17. The shortage of hard currencies, the lack of reassuring information about the financial negotiations in Paris and the prospect of the budget deficit have all combined to produce sharp reactions in the local markets. Free sterling (French account), the price of which has been fairly stable throughout the summer around 925 piastres to £1 (official rate 881), rose to 1,000 at the beginning of the month and closed at 1,060. Similarly, the price of the gold sovereign increased from 4,215 piastres to 4,670. As the bulk of imports are now being financed by free market exchange, this has already produced an increase in the cost of living, the official index of which rose to 501 compared with 495 for the two previous months.

18. On 17th October the local managers of the Shell and Socony Vacuum Oil Companies jointly informed the Lebanese Government that in view of world oil shortages it would be necessary to reduce future supplies of oil to this country. Cuts in the Shell Company supplies would not, it was stated, take effect until the beginning of next year, but in view of the Socony Vacuum Company's present supply shortage, it was decided that the two companies would pool their stocks in order to maintain essential supplies, and that consumption would be restricted immediately. There has been no restriction on consumption since the end of the war and demand has increased rapidly to more than double the pre-war figures. The Government's decision to restrict supplies has caused some alarm, especially as regards gas oil on which local industry, agriculture and electricity are almost entirely dependent. 1948 supplies have not yet been announced but it is believed that they will be well below the level of 1947 and possibly less than in 1946. The oil companies have had to suffer a good deal of criticism from sections of the press who regard the present cuts either as

a form of blackmail to obtain higher prices or as the instruments of a policy designed to create economic difficulties and to exert political pressure on the Arab States.

(C) Press

Palestine

19. This month may rightly be called the Palestine Month. All other items dwindled into insignificance. The press reaction to the latest developments may be summarised as follows:—

(1) The sudden arrival of the Mufti in the Lebanon in order to be in close touch with the Arab League, and the bold, defiant and unequivocal decisions taken in respect of the Palestine question, made the papers believe that this question was passing through its most critical stage. All papers deplored the partition plan, and scare headlines of Arab resolution to fight, and of mobilisation of Arab armies along the Palestinian borders, frequently appeared in the nationalist papers. The Mufti was hailed as the Arab hero destined to save Palestine, and the Arab League was highly commended on the firm stand it took. French and pro-French papers appreciated the bold stand of the Arab League; but at the same time feared that the League was a bit too hasty in taking such a stand, and that armed Arab resistance may not ultimately be in Arab interests. A few papers objected to the Lebanon being involved in an armed revolt.

(2) The support of the partition plan, first by the Slavic bloc and then by the United States and the U.S.S.R., opened the eyes of the Arabs to the fact that in fighting for their rights they should depend solely on themselves. America's attitude was no surprise to them; but that of Russia was a bitter disappointment. All papers were hard on America, and most of them extremely cynical in their remarks. Several were furious at the sudden change in Russia's policy; but one at least tried to justify this attitude by recalling that in all international disputes the Arab delegates always sided with the Anglo-Saxons against the Soviet. Another argument was, that by supporting the partition plan Russia paved the way for Soviet armed intervention in Arab East affairs. As America would under no circumstances tolerate such intervention, the Russian move was sure to undermine the partition plan. In any case, this new development

tilted the scales in favour of Britain, although a few ultra-nationalist papers continued to look upon Britain as *the* cause of all trouble in Palestine. It is noteworthy that the Syrian and Lebanese Communist Parties after a long period of silence issued a joint statement deploring the partition plan.

(3) Most papers received with a sigh of relief Mr. Creech Jones's statement that Britain would evacuate Palestine should there be no decision satisfactory to both Arabs and Jews; but a few suspected that this was a political feint on the part of Britain, for they could not believe that she would let go so easily a zone so vital for her imperial communications. The replacement of Britain by Transjordan forces in certain border posts made some papers wonder whether a British evacuation meant occupation by the nominally Arab, actually British, army of King Abdullah, and the declaration of a Zionist National Home within a Hashimite Monarchy.

Russia—(see above)

20. Much importance was attached to the meeting of the nine Communist Parties of Warsaw; but whether it meant the revivification of the Comintern or not, was a subject of controversy between Communist and anti-Communist papers. The latter believe

that it has made mutual understanding between Russia and America impossible.

Egypt and the Sudan

21. Aside from cholera items, the only bit of news of interest is that bilateral negotiations between Britain and Egypt may be resumed, and Egypt may return to the sterling area.

Arab League

22. Azzam Pasha's alleged support of a Mediterranean bloc to include, beside the Arab League, such countries as Turkey, Greece, and possibly Italy, has been severely attacked by pro-French and Communist papers; the former on the ground that it reflects on the sovereignty of the Arab States, and the latter because, as they believe, it is directed against the Soviet Union.

Internal

23. Internal comment centred around the bad economic policy of the Government, and especially of the Supply Ministry. Budget deficit, wheat shortage and soaring prices of essentials were frequently referred to as irrefutable arguments against the economic policy of the Government. The attempt at bringing about a reconciliation between the Government and the National Liberation Committee was much publicised in Nationalist papers.